

John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture

Steven D. Driver

John Cassian and the Reading
of Egyptian Monastic Culture

Driver



VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

JOHN CASSIAN AND THE READING OF EGYPTIAN MONASTIC
CULTURE

MEDIEVAL HISTORY AND CULTURE

VOLUME 8

STUDIES IN

MEDIEVAL HISTORY AND CULTURE

edited by

Francis G. Gentry

Professor of German
Pennsylvania State University

A ROUTLEDGE SERIES

OTHER BOOKS IN THIS SERIES

1. "AND THEN THE END WILL COME"

Early Latin Christian Interpretations of the Opening of the Seven Seals

Douglas W. Lumsden

2. TOPOGRAPHIES OF GENDER IN MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN
ARTHURIAN ROMANCE

Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand

3. CHRISTIAN, SARACEN AND GENRE IN MEDIEVAL FRENCH
LITERATURE

Imagination and Cultural Interaction in the French Middle Ages

Lynn Tarte Ramey

4. WORD OUTWARD

Medieval Perspectives on the Entry into Language

Corey Marvin

5. JUSTICE & THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF EARLY MIDDLE HIGH
GERMAN LITERATURE

Robert G. Sullivan

6. MARRIAGE FICTIONS IN OLD FRENCH SECULAR NARRATIVES,
1170-1250

A Critical Re-evaluation of the Courtly Love Debates

Keith Nickolaus

7. WHERE TROUBADOURS WERE BISHOPS

The Occitania of Folc of Marseille (c. 1150-1231)

Nichole M. Schulman

JOHN CASSIAN AND THE
READING OF EGYPTIAN
MONASTIC CULTURE

Steven D. Driver

ROUTLEDGE
NEW YORK & LONDON

Published in 2002 by

Routledge

29 West 35th Street

New York, NY 10001

www.Routledge-NY.com

Published in Great Britain by

Routledge

11 New Fetter Lane

London EC4P 4EE

Routledge is a member of the Taylor & Francis Group.

Copyright © 2002 by Steven D. Driver.

The author is grateful to Peeters Publishers for permission to reprint portions of “The Development of Jerome’s Views on the Ascetic Life,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 1995; and to The American Benedictine Review, Inc. for permission to reprint portions of “From Palestinian Ignorance to Egyptian Wisdom: Jerome and Cassian on the Monastic Life,” *American Benedictine Review*, 1997.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter

invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without written permission from the publishers.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Driver, Steven D., 1964-

John Cassian and the reading of Egyptian monastic culture /
by Steven D. Driver.

p. cm. — (Medieval history and culture)

Includes biographical references and index.

ISBN 0-415-93668-3

ISBN 978-1-136-70804-6 (ePub)

1. Desert Fathers. 2. Cassian, John, ca. 360-ca. 435. I. Title.
II. Studies in medieval history and culture.

BR190.D75 2002

271'.02062—dc21

2001048565

Series Editor Foreword

Far from providing just a musty whiff of yesteryear, research in Medieval Studies enters the new century as fresh and vigorous as never before. Scholars representing all disciplines and generations are consistently producing works of research of the highest caliber, utilizing new approaches and methodologies. Volumes in the Medieval History and Culture series will include studies on individual works and authors of Latin and vernacular literatures, historical personalities and events, theological and philosophical issues, and new critical approaches to medieval literature and culture.

Momentous changes have occurred in Medieval Studies in the past thirty years in teaching as well as in scholarship. Thus the goal of the Medieval History and Culture series is to enhance research in the field by providing an outlet for monographs by scholars in the early stages of their careers on all topics related to the broad scope of Medieval Studies, while at the same time pointing to and highlighting new directions that will shape and define scholarly discourse in the future.

Francis G. Gentry

To my parents, whose love and support made this book possible

Contents

Preface

Introduction

1. John Cassian

What Can Be Known

Intriguing Possibilities

2. Stories and Histories of Early Egyptian Monasticism

The Story of Christian Monasticism

A Revision of the Story

Reading Evagrius Ponticus

3. Western Perceptions of Egyptian Monasticism

The *Lives* of Antony and Paul

Jerome's Early Monastic Vision

Jerome's Influence

Apatheia and *Inpeccantia*

4. Literary Structure and Monastic *Praxis*

Appropriating the Self in the Text

Reading the *Institutes*

Reading as Monastic *Praxis*

5. Implications for *Praxis*: A Reconsideration of the Solitary Life

Framing the Question

Anachoresis in the *Institutes*

Piamun and John on the Solitary Life

Anachoresis as Interiority

6. Implications for *Theoria*: Reading, Interiority and the Transfiguration of the Self

Withdrawal and Interiority

Reading and Mystical Knowledge

Reading and the Interiorization of the Text

Reading and the Transfiguration of the Self

Reading and Egyptian Monastic Culture

Bibliography

Index

Preface

This book began as a dissertation under the supervision of J. N. Hillgarth and Robert Sinkewicz. I cannot sufficiently thank either gentleman for their warm and enthusiastic support of my entire graduate program. Nor can I calculate the many ways that gallons of coffee and hours of conversation in the common room of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies shaped the course of my research and of this particular project. Among those who consumed that coffee and spent those hours in conversation with me were Lisa Maugans Driver, James Ginther, Kimberly Rivers, David Wiljer and Jeremy Worthen. I would also like to thank Columba Stewart, who read my dissertation while he was completing his own study of Cassian's theology and offered helpful suggestions.

Since defending my dissertation in 1995, I have received research support from the American Academy of Religion, Loyola College in Maryland, and the Ecumenical Institute of Theology. Valparaiso University graciously allowed me to delay the start of my present position so that I might complete final revisions. The support I have received has enabled me to present papers at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, the International Conference on Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies at Villanova University, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. I am grateful for the suggestions and criticisms that I received at those conferences and, where possible, I have attempted to address the concerns that were raised. I would also like to thank the editors at *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, the *American Benedictine Review* and the Pontifical Institute of

Mediaeval Studies Press for their suggestions when completing related articles and for allowing me to reprint revised portions of those articles in this book.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Lisa, whose love and encouragement have enabled me to complete what at times seemed an impossible task.

A note about translations: The translations of Cassian are my own. At times, I have been guided in these translations by the English translations of Boniface Ramsey and Edgar Gibson, and by the French translations of Eugene Pichery and Jean-Claude Guy.

JOHN CASSIAN AND THE READING OF EGYPTIAN MONASTIC
CULTURE

Introduction

In the second decade of the fifth century, Castor, the bishop of Apt, established a monastery in his episcopal see. Having already undertaken a monastic vocation on his own, Castor sought a way of life that could serve as a model for himself and for his community.¹ There were already several monastic communities in the surrounding region which could have provided such a model. There were also at Lérins and elsewhere rudimentary rules which Castor could easily have adapted to govern his own fledgling community.² Nevertheless, Castor rejected the examples of his countrymen and instead looked to the East. It would seem that Castor had accepted the widely held belief that only in the East, and particularly in Egypt, was monasticism practised in its truest form. He therefore commissioned John Cassian, a recent emigre from the East and an erstwhile resident of the Egyptian monastic communities of Nitria, Kellia and Scetis, to describe the fundamental principles of monastic life.³ Cassian responded to this commission with a series of books on the institutes of the Egyptians and an elementary discussion of the discernment of thoughts. Before he had even seen the *Institutes*, Castor commissioned Cassian again, this time to relate the spiritual teachings of the desert fathers.⁴ At the behest of Castor and others after him, Cassian would eventually complete twenty-four dialogues or *Conferences*, each of which purported to relate his conversations with the elders of the Egyptian desert.

To have earned these commissions, Cassian must have commanded significant respect. He had already been allowed by Proculus, the bishop of Marseilles, to establish monasteries

for both men and women in the city's environs.⁵ The interest of Castor and later patrons shows that Cassian's reputation had spread well beyond this port. Cassian's authority to teach, however, did not come from his own reputation as much as it did from his lengthy sojourn among the desert fathers. Castor and the others wanted to hear the Egyptian *abbas*, not Cassian himself. Cassian ostensibly accepted these limitations and described his function as an author as being nothing more than that of an organizer and reporter. He promised that he would describe only what he had seen and experienced while travelling among the Egyptians more than two decades earlier and that he would introduce no innovations of his own. As though to guarantee this promise, Cassian cast much of his teaching in the form of autobiographical dialogues in which he recorded the very words the *abbas* had spoken to him.

For the most part, Cassian was taken at his word. While his contemporaries noted that some of his conferences had more to do with western theological debates than with life in the Egyptian desert, Cassian was nevertheless respected as a witness to a long line of saints who had surrendered all for the sake of union with God.⁶ Fifteen centuries later, the first modern scholars to examine Cassian also took him at his word.⁷ While Salvatore Marsili and M. Olphe-Galliard noted that Cassian's monastic theology differed in some respects from that of his masters, his "historical account" went largely unchallenged.⁸ This credulity was partly due to ignorance of ancient Egyptian monastic life, for much of the literary and archaeological evidence upon which we rely today was not available to earlier scholars. However, Cassian's historical account was also accepted because of modern expectations about the nature of autobiography. Cuthbert Butler, for

example, found “it impossible to doubt the substantial truth of Cassian’s picture of monastic life, based, as it appears to be, upon the writer’s personal observation.”⁹ Consequently, scholars traced Cassian’s itinerary, identified the saints he mentioned, and used his description of the lives and doctrines of the monks to fill out otherwise sketchy information about the origins of Egyptian monasticism. If Cassian should be shown to err or to contradict other witnesses, it would typically be dismissed as an inevitable lapse in memory.

More recently, a greater knowledge of Egyptian monasticism and a closer analysis of Cassian’s claims have led scholars to question Cassian’s role as an historian. Owen Chadwick, for example, demonstrated that Cassian’s account of the origin of Matins is inconsistent and cannot possibly be accurate.¹⁰ Adalbert de Vogüé noted that Cassian’s two different versions of the origins of monasticism are more concerned with his monastic theology than with historical fact.¹¹ In a sweeping survey of Cassian’s historical claims, Jean-Claude Guy effectively sounded the death knell for Cassian as an historian by arguing that his itinerary is unlikely at best, his topographical errors cannot be put down to mere lapses in memory, and his account of the anthropomorphite controversy is one-sided and incomplete.¹² Most importantly, Guy concluded that Cassian likely did not meet some of the *abbas* whose acquaintance he claimed. While the fictive aspect of Cassian’s dialogues had long been acknowledged, Guy argued that some of the conferences likely had not occurred at all. While Guy did not deny the fundamental role that Cassian’s Egyptian experiences had played in his formation, he asserted that Cassian’s choice of an autobiographical form was little more than an attempt to invoke the authority of a venerated lineage of desert fathers.¹³

Cassian's

devaluation as a monastic historian has encouraged the examination of his writings in a new light. Guy himself described Cassian as a thinker of "remarkable originality and depth."¹⁴ H. O. Weber and de Vogüé looked beyond the confines of the Delta region to examine the wide variety of monastic writers who had helped to shape his theology.¹⁵ Peter Munz largely avoided the question of Cassian's monastic roots and instead interpreted his understanding of friendship and community according to the thought of Origen and Cicero.¹⁶ Others shifted the focus of study away from the environment that formed Cassian to the one in which he wrote. Philip Rousseau, for example, suggested ways in which the contemporary situation in Gaul influenced Cassian's thought.¹⁷ Paul Christophe and more recently Robert Markus examined Cassian within the context of the growing Christianization of Gaul and the universal development of an ascetic, bicameral world-view.¹⁸ Elizabeth Clark has suggested that Cassian's thought should be examined under the rubric of "Origenism," although she cautions that "Origenist" must be understood to signify a set of theological presuppositions molded much more by fourth-century debate than by Origen's own writings.¹⁹

While great strides have been made toward understanding Cassian as a monastic theologian, the increased interest in particular aspects of his thought has created difficulties of its own. Since it is now accepted that Cassian was not an historian, much less an "autobiographer," any serious consideration of the autobiographical structure of his works has been largely abandoned. Moreover, the *Institutes* have increasingly come to be ignored, for they are often regarded as little more than an amalgamation of disparate literary

sources and an expansion of Evagrius Ponticus' teaching on the vices.²⁰ Scholarly interest has instead focused on the synthesis of monastic theology that Cassian developed in his *Conferences*. His monastic works have been culled to determine where and how he addressed issues relevant to patristic theology, monastic spirituality or late ancient asceticism. Moreover, since Cassian's monastic works are no longer regarded as "historical," their evident lack of any systematic arrangement is no longer as easily forgiven. Instead, they are now often characterized as circular, repetitive, and disorganized. In what he considered to be an act of charity, Owen Chadwick suggested that Cassian's writings have suffered from a disorganized exemplar rather than from a disorganized mind.²¹

By examining particular topics or themes of Cassian's monastic *corpus*, scholars have risked introducing "systems" of their own, creating from its seemingly disjointed parts a theological structure that Cassian himself would not have recognized. Alarmed by this trend, de Vogüé charged that the analysis of Cassian's monastic teaching has suffered from the failure of scholars to consider adequately its form and arrangement. To demonstrate that there is in fact a discernible structure or organization to Cassian's writings, de Vogüé sketched a brief outline of the *Conferences* that suggests an alternation between the discussion of monastic theology and its practical application in the life of the reader.²² While he did not entirely discount the validity of a thematic approach, de Vogüé contended that the analysis of any facet of Cassian's thought must take into account not only its immediate context, but also its place within the overall arrangement of the *Conferences*. Columba Stewart demonstrated that similar attention must be given to the

internal arrangement of individual *Conferences*.²³ Substituting the term “spiralling” for the derogatory “repetitive,” Stewart argued that while Cassian frequently returns to issues he has already discussed, his treatment becomes progressively more sophisticated and sublime. Lauren Pristas has made a similar argument regarding Cassian’s understanding of grace and free will.

While going far toward showing that the content of Cassian’s writings cannot be separated from its form, these studies have tended to leave aside the related question of how the text was to be read. Since Cassian structured his text to encourage particular cognitive acts within his reader, the interpretation of the *Institutes* and *Conferences* depends at least partly on the manner in which they were to be read. Cassian intended his monastic *corpus* to be read by a narrowly defined audience within a limited set of circumstances. It would therefore be helpful to describe briefly the identity of his intended reader and the historical context of his literary efforts.

Modern scholars were not the first to notice the difficulty of representing Cassian’s monastic teaching as a “system.” Cassian himself alluded to this problem at the outset of his work.²⁴ In the preface to his *Institutes*, Cassian complained that Castor had not fully understood the magnitude of his commission. Though a literary commonplace of the day, this statement contained an essential truth, for Cassian had been commissioned to collect in a single work, or to “systematize,” what were in fact widely differing and often contradictory monastic customs. Cassian addressed this problem by refusing to represent “eastern monasticism” as a unified or synthetic experience. Palestinian monasticism, he claimed,

was inferior to that of Egypt, and there were different customs and teachings even among the Egyptians.²⁵ Instead, Cassian emphasized the practices of a small group of settlements in a limited geographical area: those of Nitria, Kellia and Scetis. He took his understanding of the monastic life and of the larger world principally from the “Origenist” monks who resided there and relied particularly on the writings of Evagrius Ponticus, whose collected works remain our best source for the thought and practices of these monks.

The establishment of strict geographical and theological boundaries, however, was still not sufficient to allow Cassian to relate the institutes of the Egyptians. Instruction and learning in these monastic settlements were largely experiential. Doctrine was integrally related to *praxis* and both depended upon the interaction between the master and the student. Typically, the master would offer *logoi*, or words that would lead to salvation, after he had discerned the particular needs of the one seeking advice. These *logoi* received elaboration or explanation in a number of ways: from the master himself, either verbally or by example; from the personal enlightenment of a particularly introspective monk; from discussions among the brethren; etc. Each of these ways had in common the fact that they were situated within a coherent and systematic way of life. Spheres of interaction between the master and student, and among the brethren themselves, were clearly demarcated. It was necessary for each member to act within established parameters if the community as a whole were to function effectively.

Cassian’s difficulty lay in how to “systematize”, or convey in a written text, an experience heavily based upon supervision,

discernment, and discourse among one's fellows. A guide for conduct or a list of monastic practices would not have conveyed the depth and richness of the monastic experience. Nor would it have addressed the practical problems of guidance and supervision. The young monk seeking a *logos* from a book could not benefit from the discernment of an *abba*. There would be no certainty that the *logoi* would address either the reader's plight or his capacity for understanding. On the other hand, a theoretical discourse on the goals of the spiritual life would have risked offering sacred mysteries to those who should not possess them. If a monk were more ambitious than spiritually trained, he might stumble upon texts for which he was unprepared. Like Evagrius and the fathers of the *Apophthegmata*, Cassian believed that incautious authors shared in the guilt of their readers.²⁶

These difficulties were compounded by the fact that Cassian's Gallic audience had at best a very limited access to the literary and cultural *milieu* of the Origenist monks. They did not share with their Egyptian counterparts a common monastic experience; nor did they possess the exegetical keys to unlock Egyptian monastic teaching. The view of Egyptian monasticism which prevailed in Gaul was in some ways worse than ignorance. Instead of a *tabula rasa*, Cassian was confronted with a series of misconceptions and unrealistic expectations. One must include among these a peculiar fascination with miracles and thaumaturgy; a skewed perception of *anachoresis* as complete isolation; a partial knowledge of mysteries that exceeded any degree of *praxis*; and little understanding of the relationship between master and student that was the crux of Egyptian monastic life. It is also likely that Cassian's readers were illdisposed to the name

of Origen. His entire *corpus* had been summarily condemned by Anastasius I in 400 and Jerome, who had embedded much of his polemic against Origen in his biblical commentaries and monastic writings, enjoyed wide circulation among Gallic monks. Thus, while Cassian's audience would not often possess a complete grasp of Origen's theology, they were nonetheless hostile to things "Origenist".

Cassian's task was consequently threefold. First, he was asked to convey in a written text the totality of the Egyptian monastic experience. Second, he was compelled to anticipate the expectations and preconceptions of his readers in order to lead them to a new understanding of their vocation. Finally, he faced the challenge of conveying his tradition in a way that preserved its fundamental principles while avoiding the hostility toward Origen that still simmered in the West.

From a critical standpoint, these three problems are closely related. This study will argue that Cassian addressed the absence of a common monastic experience by attempting to recreate it as an experience of reading. In other words, Cassian encouraged a form of interaction between reader and text that in some ways corresponded to the interaction between disciple and *abba*. To understand this interaction, we must first examine the ways in which the structure of Cassian's text encouraged structured acts within the reader. This requires an analysis of how the text both anticipates and transforms the images the reader can be supposed to have brought to it. It is this transformation that would lead the reader to a deeper understanding of himself and his vocation, and his deeper understanding in turn would facilitate the development of new modes of conduct. Consequently, Cassian's first two tasks are closely linked, for the successful

creation of a particular kind of reading experience depended upon his ability to anticipate and respond to his reader's expectations. The third aspect of Cassian's task comes into play when we consider the implications of this reading experience for the reader. As the reader's understanding of himself and his vocation is transformed through the act of reading, it will combine with newly formed or altered habits to create a disposition different from that which had existed before. This transformation is described according to the understanding of the human condition and of monastic life that Cassian had gained while among the monks of Egypt. Consequently, as the reader is transformed through interaction with the text, he is transformed according to the terms of Origenist monastic thought.

The problems that Cassian faced and the way in which he attempted to address them bring us once again to the "autobiographical" structure of Cassian's text. Cassian's description of his travels in Egypt is vivid. He does not merely observe the Egyptians; he interacts with them. He accepts their warm hospitality and, in exchange, adopts their way of life. As a fellow monk he shares in their *synaxeis* and participates in their sacred rites. He records the words of the monks not as a mere stenographer but as a participant in their conversations. Cassian himself seeks words of advice from the *abbas* and their responses address his innermost needs and fears. Through his discourse with the desert fathers and the application of their words, Cassian eventually sheds his youthful ignorance and acquires the maturity necessary for pure prayer.

The true subject of Cassian's account is his inner self. His autobiography is a journey of the soul. It is his interior life

that is important, for his interior self forms the essence of his humanity. Any account of events that pertained more to his external condition was of secondary importance. While Cassian likely misrepresented or even entirely fabricated some of his “historical” encounters with the *abbas*, he nevertheless faithfully represented his interior growth and transformation. Guy’s argument that Cassian’s account is not autobiographical is therefore not entirely valid. The fact that Cassian’s physical sojourn could not have occurred exactly as he described it does not mean that he misrepresented the salient features of the journey of his soul.

If Cassian’s interior self is the subject of his account, we must inquire further into the role of this self in the text. More precisely, we must examine whether and how the self of the text interacts with the self of the reader. Cassian did not merely describe his own spiritual transformation; he also encouraged that of his reader. This was accomplished by encouraging the reader to identify with the self in the text. As the reader progressed through the text, he gradually appropriated the voice of Cassian and, as a consequence, became, in a way, the self in the text. It was therefore the reader as well as Cassian who journeyed through Egypt and who grew into spiritual maturity. It was the reader who adopted the discipline of the Egyptian monastic communities and acquired the purity of heart necessary for true contemplation.

The inclusion of false historical data particular to Cassian’s own life does not hinder this progress. While many of the historical events Cassian describes did occur and can be confirmed from other sources, these events are not significant in themselves. They in no way create an obstacle to the

appropriation of Cassian's voice. One might take note of a related, though more celebrated, concern in Augustine's *Confessions*. Pierre Courcelle has argued that the details of Augustine's conversion in a Milanese garden are to a large extent a literary fiction.²⁷ It is unlikely that children or anyone else would have been chanting the improbable expression of *tolle, lege*.²⁸ It is far more likely that Augustine was representing in physical terms the inner voices of his soul or an angelic call to abandon his current situation and to live wholly for God. Similarly, Augustine's account of his stealing fruit from a tree as a youth receives far more attention than simple petty theft would seem to merit.²⁹ What is important is the interior reality of sin, not the specific nature of the sinful act. While there is little reason to doubt that both the conversion and the theft occurred in some fashion or another, the details of the stories do not prevent the reader from appropriating Augustine's voice as one's own. They are images that can be appropriated because of the unity of all human experience. All have sinned. All who seek God have in some way been called to him. This call has led them to regret their sin and to fear its consequences. Consequently, the reader need not have heard voices in a garden or stolen his neighbor's fruit to share with Augustine the more profound experiences of sin and conversion.

Like the *Confessions*, the *Institutes* and the *Conferences* appealed to the shared experiences, images and ideals of their readers. To accomplish this, they needed to establish some connection, some sort of link between the reader and the text, and contemporary critical theory can go far toward explaining the interaction between the reader and Cassian's text. However, Cassian already had at his disposal an analysis of the spiritual and psychological difficulties of the monastic life

based on long experience in a self-conscious, closely knit community. He also had at hand a sophisticated understanding of reading and of the self which was derived to a large extent from Origen's method of biblical exegesis.

Origen's exegesis of the Psalms is to a large extent a matter of voice appropriation. The goal of Origen's interpretation is "to locate the hearer or reader [of the Psalms] within the situation of [the Psalmist] and to place the words of the text in the mouth of the listener so that he can appropriate them as his own."³⁰ The reader is to ascertain the situation of the Psalmist and to dwell upon how the Psalmist's situation reflects his own. After the reader has grasped the way in which he and the Psalmist share particular needs, joys, sorrows, fears, etc., he (the reader) can speak the words of the Psalmist as his own. The differences in historical situation are not barriers to this. The Psalmist and reader are linked by a shared humanity and a shared need for union with God that transcend particular historical circumstances.

This method of reading was not limited to Origen. Termed *prosopopoeia*, it was employed by other exegetes of the Psalms.³¹ It was also recommended to monks as a form of *praxis* in Athanasius' *Epistula ad Marcellinum* and Cassian described it as a sublime method of prayer that could be achieved when the key to pure prayer had been found.³² More important, *prosopopoeia* was a method of reading that was not limited to the Psalms. A classical rhetorical trope, it could be applied in varying degrees to other books of the Bible and also to didactic *exempla*.

Cassian adapted Origen's exegetical method as a model for reading his own monastic works. Just as Origen encouraged

the interiorization of the Psalmist's voice, so Cassian encouraged the interiorization of his own. A crucial part of Cassian's method of instruction was therefore the act of reading itself. Consequently, the process of instruction is as important as its content. In other words, the content cannot be separated from its form.

NOTES

1. Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum, praef.* 2-3; hereafter *Inst.*
2. E.g., de Vogüé, "Regula," 39-45.
3. Cassian's commission was to relate the "instituta monasteriorum, quae per Aegyptum ac Palaestinam custodiri conspeximus." *Inst., praef.* 3. He would later use *regula* in place of *instituta*. *Inst., praef.* 8.
4. Cassian, *Conlationes* 1-10, *praef.* 1; hereafter *Con.*
5. Smith and Wace, *Dictionary*, 4:489-490, suggest that Proculus may have held his see beyond 426. He could not have been archbishop after 428, Gams, *Series*, 573, and Duchesne, *Fastes*, 1:274. All agree that he held his post from at least 381. For Cassian's monastic foundations, Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus* 65.
6. Among those who doubted Cassian's veracity was Prosper of Aquitaine, who in his *De gratia Dei* accused Cassian of placing the western heresy of Pelagianism in the mouth of the Egyptian Chaeremon. Even Prosper, however, showed deference to Cassian's reputation as a monk.

7.

The following brief survey is intended merely to indicate the general direction that studies of Cassian have taken. For a more complete survey of the scholarship through 1960, see Weber, *Stellung*, 1-18, and to the present, Stewart, *Cassian*, 3-26.

8. Marsili, *Giovanni Cassiano*\ Olphe-Galliard, "Pureté de coeur," 28-60 and "Vie contemplative," 252-288.

9. Butler, *Lausiac History*, 1:205.

10. O. Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd ed., 71-77.

11. De Vogüé, "Monachisme et église," 213-240.

12. Guy, "Jean Cassien," 363-372.

13. Guy, "Jean Cassien," 372.

14. "En fait, Cassien n'a rien d'un historien: il est un théoricien de la vie spirituelle, et un théoricien d'une originalité et d'une profondeur remarquable." Guy, "Jean Cassien," 372.

15. Weber, *Stellung*; de Vogüé, "Sources," 241-312.

16. Munz, "John Cassian," 1-22.

17. Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 169-234.

18. Christophe, *Cassien*, 7-40. Markus, *End*, 157-197.

19. Clark, *Origenist*, 249-259.
20. De Vogüé, “Interpolation,” 217-221, and “Morceau,” 7-12, is an exception to this, although even de Vogüé’s interest is principally one of source criticism.
21. O. Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd ed., 43.
22. De Vogüé, “Comprendre,” 250-272.
23. Stewart, “Unceasing,” 159-177.
24. *Inst.*, *praef.* 3.
25. E.g., *Inst.* 4.1,17; *Con.* 17.2.2; 17.5.2.
26. *Inst.* 7.13; *Con.* 1.1; 21.32.1.
27. Courcelle, *Recherches*, 188-202.
28. Augustine, *Confessiones* 8.12.
29. Augustine, *Confessiones* 2.4.
30. Torjeson, *Hermeneutical*, 50.
31. Rondeau, *Commentaires*, *passim*.
32. *Con.* 10.10-11; Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 15-23.

CHAPTER 1

John Cassian

Whether tracing the course of Cassian's life or interpreting his theology, one cannot help but be drawn into the various controversies that swirled around Origen and the so-called Origenists. It might therefore seem odd that Cassian rarely alluded, even indirectly, either to Origen's theology or to the Origenist controversies. Cassian recorded that he was present in the Egyptian monastic community of Nitria when Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria, used his annual paschal letter to condemn imagining God in human form during prayer. However, Cassian's narrative ends before Theophilus' dramatic reversal and subsequent persecution of the Origenist monks residing there. Nor did Cassian mention his embassy to Rome on behalf of John Chrysostom, the patriarch of Constantinople, even though the same Theophilus played a significant role in John's deposition and John had lost favor in Constantinople in part because of his support of the exiled Origenist monks who had fled to him. While Cassian is largely silent about the years between his leaving Constantinople and arriving in Marseilles, it is quite possible that he was in Palestine when another controversy over Origen arose, this time under the guise of Pelagianism and its supporters. Even when Cassian defended his vision of Egyptian monastic life and theology against the attacks of Jerome, a late-comer to the anti-Origenist camp who compensated for lost time with the ferocity of his attacks, he did so obliquely rather than through direct confrontation.

The controversies that Cassian so carefully avoided mentioning do more than provide beacons for charting the course of his career; they also offer insight into the presentation and content of his monastic theology. Even though they had been tainted with the stain of Origenism, Cassian numbered some of the Origenist monks among the great heroes of monastic life. He was also heavily influenced by the theology of Evagrius Ponticus, the most prolific author if not the intellectual leader of the Origenists. At times, one can also detect the influence of Origen on Cassian's theology in a way that has not been filtered through Evagrius. Nevertheless, Cassian mentions neither Origen nor Evagrius by name and was careful to avoid key terms associated with their thought.

It was not an aversion to conflict that led to Cassian's relative silence about his monastic and theological forebears, for he participated in other theological debates of his day. Instead, Cassian's caution was dictated by the intended audience of his monastic writings. If his potential readers were to abandon reading his *corpus* at the first sign of Origenist heresy, then Cassian would not have been able to convey the wealth of his monastic experience and thought. It will be argued later that this concern played a significant role in both the form and the content of Cassian's monastic theology. For now, however, it would be best to see what might be gleaned from Cassian's writings about his life, or at least those aspects of his life that are pertinent to interpreting his monastic theology.

WHAT CAN BE KNOWN

The information that Cassian provides about himself is limited by his concern to record an interior rather than an exterior journey. Rather than slavishly record the actual events of his sojourn through Egypt, Cassian describes his spiritual journey from an immature novice filled with misconceptions about the monastic vocation to one sufficiently mature to grasp the nature of pure and ceaseless prayer. He tends to record those facts and events that relate the customs and doctrines of the Egyptian monks and are of spiritual and didactic import, rather than those that would be of most use to a modern biographer.

Nevertheless, Cassian does reveal a few things about himself. He was born of wealthy Christian parents whose piety was such that they would have supported him in his monastic endeavors if he had ever returned home.¹ Longing for his home in his last *Conference*, Cassian describes its surrounding terrain.² At some point early in his life, he befriended Germanus. Despite Germanus' greater age, the two were of one mind in their monastic zeal.³ At an uncertain date, they travelled together to Palestine where they entered a monastic community near the cave of the nativity. The two companions soon became dissatisfied with the monks of the region and Cassian frequently expresses his frustration with monastic life in Palestine, criticizing the Palestinians for their legalism and lack of zeal and comparing their customs unfavorably to those of the Egyptians.⁴ As will be shown in [chapter 3](#), Cassian's complaints about Palestinian and Syrian monasticism are typically general and do not always refer to his own community near Bethlehem. However, he does write

that he and Germanus feared their spiritual life would be jeopardized if, upon returning from Egypt to Bethlehem, they had been compelled to remain there.⁵

While a young monk in Bethlehem, Cassian and Germanus did encounter one exemplar of monastic perfection, the *abba* Pinufius. Tellingly, Pinufius hailed not from Palestine but from Egypt. As part of a continuing effort to seek a more humble station, Pinufius had fled from his responsibilities as *abba* of the monks at Panephysis.⁶ Some of his brethren ultimately discovered Pinufius while they were on pilgrimage to Bethlehem and they convinced him to return to Egypt, but the example of Pinufius' humility and the perfection of his virtue were not lost on Cassian and Germanus.

The companions' own circumstances in Palestine could not compete with the example of Pinufius and the growing reputation of Egyptian monastic life. Adopting the widely held belief that the solitary life was superior to the communal, they left their community in Bethlehem in order to dwell among the Egyptian anchorites who had come to exemplify the utter abandonment of one's self for God.⁷ According to the itinerary set out in Cassian's monastic writings, the two travelled a great deal in lower Egypt and the Delta and eventually settled at Nitria.⁸ They sought guidance from a number of monks, including their friend Pinufius, and the advice that was given to them comprises the bulk of the *Conferences*.⁹

Before leaving Bethlehem Cassian and Germanus had been compelled by their superiors to vow that they would soon return.¹⁰ This came to weigh heavily upon them and after

seven years in Egypt they felt it necessary to fulfill their vow.¹¹ This return was merely perfunctory. Upon arriving back at Bethlehem, the companions announced to their superiors that they intended to reside permanently at Nitria. Although they quickly returned to Egypt, this intention would also go unfulfilled. Sometime after their return, Theophilus' paschal letter of 399 inaugurated strife and even violence among the monks of Nitria and Kellia.¹² Cassian is next seen in Constantinople being ordained deacon against his will by John Chrysostom.¹³

Cassian later composed his *Institutes* and *Conferences* at the request of several monastic and episcopal figures in southern Gaul. He dedicated his first work, the *Institutes*, to Castor, for whom the only date is a mention in a papal letter from 419.¹⁴ Chadwick has plausibly argued that Cassian's second set of *Conferences*, numbered 11-17, were published in 427 and that the third set, *Conferences* 18-24, were published a year later.¹⁵ Cassian's last work, written against Nestorius, would have been superfluous after the Council of Ephesus in 431. It is therefore possible on the basis of internal evidence to place Cassian's literary activity roughly in the third decade of the fifth century.

Other writers have also provided information about Cassian's career. Gennadius, is the most authoritative source, even though he wrote in the latter part of the fifth century. He relates that Cassian was born in Roman Scythia minor, or modern Dobrudja, and was ordained deacon by John Chrysostom. As a priest at Marseille, Cassian founded two monasteries, one each for men and for women. Gennadius also provides a detailed description of Cassian's monastic and theological works which confirms the order of composition

set out in their prefaces. Finally, Gennadius writes that Cassian died a monk in Marseille.¹⁶ Palladius wrote half a century earlier than Gennadius but from a greater distance. He relates that Cassian was a disciple of John Chrysostom and had served as an emissary to Rome on his behalf. Though only a deacon, Cassian played a significant role in the mission by bearing a letter from Chrysostom to Innocent.¹⁷ The Roman bishop's reply confirms Cassian's role, and the Greek version of this reply was recorded by Sozomen.¹⁸ In two later letters, Innocent mentions a certain *compresbyter Cassianus* who served as an emissary from Alexander, the patriarch of Antioch, although it is not certain that this was John Cassian.¹⁹ In short, the number and rank of the people whom Cassian mentioned in his writings and who refer to Cassian in their own show that, by the end of his life, Cassian had become a significant monastic and ecclesiastical figure.²⁰

INTRIGUING POSSIBILITIES

Though sparse, most of the evidence concerning Cassian's career is straight-forward and requires little elaboration. However, while the sequence of the known events can be mapped fairly easily, the precise chronology of these events is far from certain and has been the object of much speculation. Cassian's activities between his mission to Rome in 404 and his arrival at Marseille, not later than 426, are also a matter for conjecture.²¹ While these two questions are of no small importance for Cassian's development as a monk and theologian, yet another question remains that has received an inordinate amount of attention: the place of Cassian's birth.²²

Gennadius records that Cassian was *natione Scythia*²³ That Cassian was born in Scythia Minor accords very well with what is known of him. Being raised in an eastern Latin province would go far toward explaining his fluency in both Latin and Greek. Moreover, Marrou has noted that *Cassianus* is recorded as a family name in a region of Scythia Minor whose geography corresponds to Cassian's description of his homeland.²⁴ Some, however, have attempted to place Cassian's *patria* anywhere from Provence to Scythopolis to Sert. Marrou, reviewing these efforts, rightly concludes that "c'est bien là le type de ces 'problèmes' où l'érudition, accumulant des efforts désordonnés, n'a abouti qu'à embrouiller, jusqu'à la rendre inextricable, une question à la vérité fort simple."²⁵ Even if not "simple," the question is of little relevance to Cassian's monastic life and thought, except that Cassian's birthplace was likely the source of his linguistic ability.

Bethlehem and Egypt

Cassian does not reveal his age upon entering the monastery near Bethlehem and his emphasis on his spiritual rather than temporal journey in Egypt render it impossible to derive a precise chronology of his career. When describing his *infantia* and *pueritia*, for example, Cassian could easily have been referring to his spiritual development rather than to the span of his life. Chadwick has suggested that Cassian was most likely not an oblate. While he concedes that youths, or even boys, were not unheard of in monasteries at this time, he rightly points out that placing a boy in a monastery so far from his home would have been very unusual.²⁶ Chadwick instead proposes that, as a youth, Cassian made a conscious decision to travel to Palestine to pursue a monastic vocation. Cassian's departure from Palestine for the more rigorous, and potentially more fruitful, asceticism in Egypt would also indicate a personal vocation to the monastic life. His journey to Egypt might also shed light on his willingness to travel from Scythia Minor to Bethlehem, for it shows that distance and inconvenience were not barriers to his spiritual endeavors. Eduard Schwartz has suggested that Germanus encouraged Cassian's initial venture, but again this is not certain.²⁷ Cassian was deferential to Germanus and frequently referred to him as *abba*. However, he also spoke of Germanus as a companion in spiritual combat and noted the harmony of their minds and souls, which would imply equality rather than subordination.²⁸

Cassian is also silent about when he arrived at Bethlehem and how long he remained there. Schwartz, noting Cassian's frequent references to ill health and fear of not completing his literary endeavors, assumes that he died sometime in the

430's. This can also be supported by Gennadius. Counting back, Schwartz concluded that Cassian must have arrived in Palestine within the last two decades of the fourth century. An earlier arrival, Schwartz suggested, would have warranted comment as to Cassian's longevity.²⁹

Chadwick has attempted to be more precise and argues that Cassian probably left Bethlehem before 386 and must have left by 391.³⁰ The first date hinges on Cassian's relative silence about Jerome, who with Paula took up residence near the cave of the nativity in the autumn of 386.³¹ Essentially, Chadwick doubts that Cassian could have been reserved when commenting on Jerome if they had lived within close proximity of each other. If Jerome's forceful personality had not provoked comment, then surely his bitter harassment of the Origenist monks fleeing to Palestine from Nitria would have required some mention.³² Palladius, who was a younger contemporary of Cassian and a partisan of the Origenists, was acerbic in his description of Jerome.³³

This argument is not compelling. Admittedly, in his polemic against Nestorius, Cassian praised Jerome as a teacher of catholic Christians.³⁴ This praise is not effusive, however, and may very well have been exaggerated according to the principles of the genre. To bolster his position, Cassian would have wanted to inflate the reputations of all those who supported the orthodox view. In like manner, Cassian praised Rufinus of Aquileia, whom Jerome had come to hold in bitter contempt. What is more telling is that, in the preface to his *Institutes*, Cassian belittles Jerome's monastic experience and quietly undercuts him as a monastic writer. When referring to Jerome's own monastic writings and translations, Cassian criticizes Jerome for describing only what he has heard, not

what he has experienced.³⁵ Even if Cassian had not criticized Jerome, Cassian's silence would not necessarily demonstrate a lack of acquaintance, for he makes no mention of figures who had made a far greater impact on his life, such as Evagrius. Cassian also avoids openly criticizing the Augustinians who had labelled him a heretic, even though he engaged them in debate in *Conference* 13. Cassian's associations with other people and affiliations with certain schools of thought are not to be traced through the names he drops. Rather, they are to be traced through the ideas he espouses.

Chadwick's second date hinges on Cassian's brief return to Bethlehem. To have remained in Egypt for seven years, visited Palestine and returned to Nitria in time to hear the paschal letter of 399 would require him to have first arrived in Egypt by 391. However, in the second edition of his work, Chadwick himself suggests that the passage describing Cassian's brief return to Bethlehem may be an interpolation. Consequently, the seven-year delay, and even the return itself, may not have occurred.³⁶ Therefore, Cassian may have been in Egypt for a period that could be measured either in decades or in months.

These chronological uncertainties make it difficult to determine the specific events that contributed to Cassian's monastic formation. His sojourn in Palestine before he arrived in Egypt could have been much longer than the time he spent in Egypt. Also, the itinerary of the *Conferences* suggests that Cassian and Germanus wandered for some time before arriving at Nitria in time to hear Theophilus' paschal letter. It is therefore possible that, while undoubtedly influenced by Evagrius' thought, Cassian may not have been in Nitria and

Kellia sufficiently long to have become acquainted with him personally. Finally, given that Cassian was associated with the Origenist monks who had fled from Egypt to Constantinople and may have resided with them for several years in Syria, he may have had a more profound exposure to Egyptian monastic life and even to Evagrius' theology as a refugee in Syria rather than in Egypt itself. Regardless of whether he encountered them more often in their Egyptian monasteries or as refugees in Constantinople and Syria, the theology and way of life of these monks were determining factors in how Cassian understood the monastic vocation.

Constantinople and Syria

Since Cassian claims to have been present at the events immediately preceding Theophilus' persecution of the Origenist monks, and since he is next found in Constantinople, it has generally been assumed that Cassian left Nitria in the company of the fleeing monks. However, Cassian's final *Conference* reveals a longing to return home and it is possible that he left Egypt before Theophilus' reversal. If Cassian were indeed from Scythia Minor, then Constantinople could have been intended merely as a stopping point.³⁷ It is also possible that Constantinople was neither a refuge nor a stop-over, but that John Chrysostom's reputation drew two monks already known for their willingness to travel long distances in the pursuit of holiness.³⁸

Cassian remained in Constantinople for some time and was ordained a deacon by Chrysostom. His mission to Pope Innocent in 404 was made necessary at least in part because of John's support of the monks who had fled from

Theophilus. John had appointed many of these monks to church offices and their presence angered many. Even if Cassian had left Egypt before the exodus, once in Constantinople he would have been closely associated with the monks from Nitria and Kellia. It was in this context that Palladius remembers him.³⁹

After his mission to Innocent, Cassian disappears from recorded history for at least a decade. It is possible that, after fulfilling his responsibilities to Chrysostom, Cassian remained in Rome, where he formed a friendship with Leo that Cassian would later mention in the preface to his anti-Nestorian treatise.⁴⁰ It need not have been during the first decade of the fifth century, however, that Cassian befriended a much younger Leo. Moreover, the conventions of correspondence in Late Antiquity would have allowed Cassian to refer to Leo as a friend even if they had never met.

Élie Griffe has pointed out that it would be more reasonable to assume that Cassian returned to Constantinople to report on the success of his mission.⁴¹ While he was only one of many who had appealed to Innocent on Chrysostom's behalf, Cassian played an important role as messenger. This role was perhaps facilitated by his knowledge of Latin. Griffe has further argued that the *compresbyter Cassianus* mentioned in Innocent's later letters was indeed John Cassian. This would mean that Cassian, along with many other of John Chrysostom's supporters, was expelled from Constantinople soon after his return to the city and travelled with them to Syria and Palestine.⁴² There he would have come to know Alexander, the future patriarch of Antioch and a supporter of Chrysostom's followers. According to Griffe, Cassian then conducted a second mission to Innocent on behalf of

Alexander, who wished to re-establish communion between the two patriarchates. Cassian may have been elevated from the diaconate to the priesthood as preparation for this mission, thereby earning Innocent's attribution of *compresbyter*.

Marseille

Such a scenario raises the inevitable question of why Cassian would make a third journey to the West, this time to settle in Marseille. Griffe has proposed that Cassian accompanied Lazarus of Aix on his return to Provence from Palestine. Lazarus' friendship with Proculus, the bishop of Marseille, would explain how Cassian came to establish two monasteries there. Cassian's third journey to the West would also reveal something about his character. Rather than having fled the turmoil of the East at the turn of the century, it would show him as once more travelling a great distance to find an atmosphere conducive to the spiritual life. Rather than as a fugitive, he should be portrayed as a restless, unsettled man, who at least four different times abandoned his current situation in the hope of finding something better. It still remains to be shown, however, why Cassian and Lazarus should have been drawn to one another and what Lazarus could have offered Cassian in Marseille.

The answer to the first question may come from a brief glimpse at Lazarus' career. In the last decade of the fourth century, Lazarus had acted with Proculus to bring the charge of adultery against Briccius, the successor to Martin of Tours.⁴³ They were aided in this by Heros, the archbishop of Arles. Briccius, deposed not by an ecclesiastical court but by popular outcry, was eventually

restored to his see. Pope Zosimus was later to call the charge against him nothing but calumny.⁴⁴

Together with Heros, who had suffered misfortunes of his own, Lazarus left Gaul for Palestine. When they learned that Pelagius was also in Palestine, they accused him of heresy and provoked the calling of a council at Diospolis. At least partly because neither Lazarus nor Heros appeared to prove their accusations, the council determined that Pelagius' teaching was orthodox.⁴⁵ Although nothing more is heard of Heros, Lazarus is next seen in Marseille in the summer of 417, once again assisting Proculus in an ecclesiastical dispute.⁴⁶ Following Griffe's hypothesis, Cassian would have accompanied Lazarus from Palestine to Marseille and arrived there in 416 or very early in 417.

The action that Lazarus and Proculus took against Briccius demonstrates an affection for Martin of Tours and, by extension, an affinity for the monastic vocation. Heros, Lazarus' companion in other misadventures, was also associated with Martin. Prosper of Aquitaine, painting a very different portrait of him than did Zosimus, called Heros "a holy man and a disciple of the blessed Martin."⁴⁷ Cassian may have been attracted to Lazarus through a shared interest in the monastic life. Lazarus also could have promised to support Cassian if he were to accompany Lazarus on his return to Marseille. Very soon thereafter, Cassian either founded or was placed in charge of the monastery of St. Victor in the port of Marseille. This almost certainly would have required the permission of Proculus, the bishop of Marseille. It is plausible that Lazarus, drawing upon his friendship with the bishop, had persuaded him to welcome Cassian. In turn, Cassian could have been attracted by the

prospect of living out his life in a region that spoke his native tongue, had numerous contacts with the East, and was still relatively unscathed by the political turmoil besetting the rest of the Empire.⁴⁸

Of course, much of this is supposition. Griffe himself admitted that there is no way to be certain that John Cassian and Innocent's *compresbyter Cassianus* were the same person.⁴⁹ Nor is there any proof of the connection between Cassian and Lazarus. However, Griffe's reconstruction is plausible, and the possibility that Cassian remained in the East at least a decade longer than has generally been supposed is intriguing. The nature of Cassian's monastic and theological formation is again called into question. If Cassian had spent considerable time among the Palestinian and Syrian monks greatly influenced by the Egyptian exiles and the fallout from the Origenist controversy, it would go far to explain possible Syrian influences on Cassian's descriptions of compunction and fiery prayer.⁵⁰ The circumstances of Cassian's arrival in Marseille also provoke thought. If Cassian had been enticed to the West by what was in fact a "Martinian camp," his later rejection of accounts of miracles and the voyeurism of monastic tourists would indicate significant differences with his hosts.⁵¹

What is not known about Cassian is perhaps more intriguing than what is known. We simply cannot be sure of Cassian's activities between 403 and his writing of the *Institutes*. However, Griffe's hypothesis is reasonable. It is more plausible than the assumption that Cassian abandoned his first mission to Rome without reporting back to Constantinople. It also helps to indicate at least some of the threads linking Martinian monasticism and the growth of an ascetic

movement in Provence. The sparse details of Cassian's life can only suggest the atmosphere of his spiritual development and the context of his literary efforts. If these suggestions are to be given any weight, we must examine Cassian's ascetic works with an eye to the *milieux* from which they arose. This requires a basic understanding of the origins and development of Christian monasticism in Egypt and in Gaul.

NOTES

1. *Con.* 24.1.2-3.
2. *Con.* 24.1.2.
3. *Con.* 1.1; 16.1. Cassian frequently refers to Germanus as father or *abba*. Cassian is also described as *adulescentior*, *Con.* 14.9.4. Cassian and Germanus were not related, *Con.* 16.1.
4. For the location of Cassian's monastery, *Inst.* 3.4.1; 4.31.
5. *Con.* 17 *passim*.
6. *Inst.* 4.30-31. The story is repeated in *Con.* 20.1.2-5.
7. *Inst.* 5.36.1-2.
8. While Guy, "Jean Cassien," 363-72, has shown that their itinerary is suspect, this does not preclude the possibility that the two wandered for some time among the monastic communities of the Delta region.

9. Pinufius' exhortation to a novice is recorded at the end of the fourth *Institute*.

10. This vow serves as the principal topic of *Con.* 17.

11. *Con.* 17.30.2. That the account of their return may be an interpolation, O. Chadwick, *Cassian*, 2nd ed., 17-18.

12. *Con.* 10.2-3. Cassian records only Theophilus' original position and does not recount his reversal and the violence that resulted.

13. *De incarnatione domini* 7.31. This was against his will, *Inst.* 11.18.

14. Bonifatius, "Valentinae." For the date, Duchesne, *Fastes*, 1:282, and Jaffe, *Regesta*, 53.

15. O. Chadwick, "Euladius," 204-205. The first set would therefore have been composed sometime before 427.

16. Gennadius, *De viris illustribus* 62, recorded that Cassian died "Theodosio et Valentiniano regnantibus." These two emperors were consuls in 435, but the vague reference might have a broader meaning. *PLRE*, 2:1243.

17. Palladius, *Dialogus* 3.

18. Innocentius, *Epistula* 7.1; Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.26.

19.

Innocentius, “Apostolici favoris” and “Quam gratia mihi.”
For the dates, Jaffe, *Regesta pontificum*, 47.

20. For Cassian’s immediate legacy, Stewart, *Cassian*, 24-25.

21. Cassian’s arrival before 426 is based on the only firm date for his writings, *Con.* 11-18, in 427.

22. Stewart describes the speculation on this issue as “a subindustry within Cassian studies.” *Cassian*, 4.

23. Gennadius, *De viris inlustrihus* 62.

24. Marrou, “Patrie,” 588-596. Cassian’s description, *Con.* 24.1.2.

25. Marrou, “Jean Cassien,” 7. For a detailed survey of the arguments concerning Cassian’s birthplace, Stewart, *Cassian*, 4-6.

26. O. Chadwick, *Cassian*, 1st ed., 9. This of course requires accepting Scythia or some other distant place as Cassian’s home.

27. Schwartz, “Lebensdaten,” 4.

28. *Con.* 1.1; 16.1.

29. Schwartz, “Lebensdaten,” 10.

30. O. Chadwick, *Cassian*, 2nd. ed., 10-18.

31. Kelly, *Jerome*, 129, for the date of Jerome's arrival in Palestine.
32. O. Chadwick, *Cassian*, 2nd. ed., 11.
33. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 36, 41.
34. *De incarnatione domini* 7.26.
35. *Inst., praef.* 5-7.
36. O. Chadwick, *Cassian*, 2nd ed., 17-18.
37. Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 171-172. This argument is challenged by the internal chronology of the *Conferences*, which describes Cassian pining for home long before the eruption of the anthropomorphite controversy.
38. Marrou, "Jean Cassien," 17.
39. Palladius, *Dialogus* 3.
40. *De Incarnatione domini, praef.* 1.
41. Griffé, "Cassien," 240-244.
42. Palladius, *De vita Joannis* 20, mentions this region among others as a place of refuge.
43. Zosimus, "Postquam a nobis" 3.
44. Zosimus, "Cum adversus statuta" 2.

45. Augustine, *De gestis Pelagii* 2.
46. Zosimus, “Cum adversus statuta” 2, written 21 September 417. For the date, Jaffe, *Regesta*, 49.
47. “Vir sanctus et beati Martini discipulus.” Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, an. 412 (1247)
48. Much of Palestine had been overrun by raiders in 411. Jerome and his community had felt it necessary to flee. Jerome, *Ep.* 126.2; Kelly, *Jerome*, 306, n. 53.
49. Griffe, *Ueglise*, 254-255, later became much more sure of his hypothesis.
50. Stewart, *Cassian*, 114-130 for a “tentative” (although to this reader quite profound) study of these influences.
51. *Inst.*, *praef.* 7; *Con.* 15.2.3; 18.1.3.

CHAPTER 2

Stories and Histories of Early Egyptian Monasticism

THE STORY OF CHRISTIAN MONASTICISM

The story of the beginning of Christian monasticism is one that has been told and retold many times. It is, according to many narrators, a story that is easy to tell.¹ With the advent of a Christian Empire, monastic withdrawal replaced martyrdom as the ultimate expression of selfless love for God. This new ideal was first manifested by the hermits of Egypt, who rejected all human intercourse for the sake of communion with God. The life of the hermits was harsh and their monastic practices exceeded the limits of human endurance. Known for their withdrawal from society, or *anachoresis*, these anchorites shunned all forms of human interaction and penetrated deeper and deeper into the desert for the sake of God.

The hermits' journey into the desert was more than simply a flight from the crowds; it was also a declaration of war against the powers of darkness. If the desert was a shelter from the distractions of daily life, it was also a wasteland inhabited by demons.² The hermits were the first to flee society, but they were also the vanguard for the conquest of the desert and its demonic inhabitants in the name of God. Freed from all distractions, the hermits could confront the demons with a fixed mind and clarity of purpose that could be achieved nowhere else.

While no one doubted the sanctity of such a life, few could endure its hardships. Consequently, eremitical zeal was slowly harnessed and trained, and the communal virtues of humility and obedience came to be emphasized over solitary contemplation.³ Cenobitic monasticism, especially in the

form practiced by the Pachomian communities, came to be regarded as the second of only two legitimate monastic vocations. Monks who wandered from village to village, or who depended on the gifts of others for their sustenance, or who lived in small and undisciplined groups, were regarded as being in some sense heterodox. Eventually, nearly all true monks began their vocation within a community. If they proved their worthiness, they could later join an elite group who

had progressed beyond the more limited life of the cloister to pursue a solitary life of prayer.⁴ As the fourth century drew to a close, the number of cenobites was growing almost exponentially while that of the hermits was slowly dwindling. The fiery zeal for conquering the desert was cooling as the initial fervor of the apostolic community had a few centuries earlier.

Whether anchorites or cenobites, Egyptian monks shared a profound mistrust of speculative theology. Drawn largely from the ranks of Egyptian peasants, few spoke Greek and most were illiterate. Their faith was simple, almost crude, and they possessed a child-like simplicity. Some had not even progressed sufficiently beyond their former pagan idolatry to allow them to conceive of an abstract God.⁵ The monks were therefore deeply suspicious of “Greek” theological speculation and the principles of allegorical exegesis that had originated in Alexandria. They were especially careful to avoid the heretical teachings of Origen and his followers.

After more than half a century of glory, Egyptian monasticism was rent asunder by heresy, violence and the corruption of its institutions. Origenism had penetrated the desert and tainted the spiritual teachings of the fathers. Strife

had arisen between the native Egyptians and the Greek interlopers and the ensuing violence reverberated throughout the Christian world. Proven to be dangerous asps rather than saintly monks, the Origenists were finally driven from Egypt, but this could not halt the decline of Egyptian monasticism. Even the native communities had declined. Discipline had become lax and the reasons for many practices had been forgotten. Where discipline had been preserved, it had taken on a regimented, almost military aspect.⁶ The heroes of the past had passed and they had not been replaced. Instead of demons in the desert, the pious now feared the presence of boys within the community.

Nevertheless, even as it declined in its native land, Egyptian monasticism flourished as an ideal that had already spread throughout the Christian world. Athanasius had been the first to carry this ideal to the West, initially through the example of the monks in his entourage and then by the Latin translations of his *Life of Antony*.⁷ After Athanasius the West became inundated with monastic literature. Pilgrims brought back accounts of monks. Ecclesiastical turmoil produced many exiles, exposing the West to eastern practices and allowing westerners access to monastic havens in the East.⁸ Jerome offered advice based on his experiences as a hermit in Syria and later as a cenobite in Bethlehem. He defended the burgeoning monastic tradition from the malicious attacks of Jovinian and he translated Pachomius' rules into Latin. Rufinus of Aquileia, though not as innovative as Jerome, was an even more prolific translator. He gave to the West several works of Origen, Basil's *Asceticon*, the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, the *Sententiae* of Sextus, and the *Pradius*, *Sententiae ad monachos* and *Ad virginem* of Evagrius Ponticus.

The Latin West embraced the Egyptian ideal with astonishing enthusiasm. Accounts of western monks were patterned after Egyptian literary models. Monks in Gaul were measured according to Egyptian standards and, at least in the case of Martin of Tours, an ascetic competition between Gaul and Egypt was created. Gallic aspirants to the monastic life eagerly sought information about the heroes of the Egyptian desert and descriptions of their practices served as the basis for establishing western monastic communities.⁹ John Cassian played a crucial role in providing this information, for he recounted his own experiences in Egypt at length and recorded the words of the elders themselves.¹⁰

Although it was undoubtedly inspired and given form by the Egyptians, Latin monasticism evolved to accommodate the more reserved and civilized disposition of the West.¹¹ While westerners continued to venerate the hermit as a monastic hero, they clearly emphasized the establishment of well-run, orderly communities. Obedience to an abbot replaced discipleship to a charismatic leader. Monastic rules were expanded and refined. Monastic practices were modified and regulated both to accommodate the Gallic climate and to avoid extreme and unsavory behavior.¹² Western monks also interacted more easily with the church as a whole than did their Egyptian counterparts. They were more receptive to ecclesiastical authority and it was not uncommon to find them holding ecclesiastical office.¹³ Some modern scholars would attribute this heightened ecclesiastical role to the higher levels of education found in western monasteries for, in order to accommodate the aristocratic sensibilities of many of the monks, monastic communities often established schools.¹⁴ Other scholars ascribe the education and civilized behavior of western monks to the more civilized Latin temperament.¹⁵

It would be difficult to have imagined a better story. There are identifiable protagonists (Antony, Athanasius, and Jerome) and antagonists (Jovinian, the Origenist monks, and monks who by their manner of life can be classified neither as anchorites nor as cenobites). It explains the origin and nature of many of the monastic practices which still exist today and places many elements of monastic life into easily grasped and recognizable categories. The story also helps to define orthodoxy, both in doctrine and in practice. What can be traced back in a clear line of descent to Egypt is acceptable, while what cannot be so easily traced is at the very least suspect. Finally, the story has a happy ending. After a variety of fits and starts, the threads that appear hopelessly tangled at the beginning are slowly woven together to produce a beautiful fabric that is the Western European monastic tradition.

As attractive as this story is, however, it is not accurate. The origins of Christian monasticism are not so easily traced and the multitude of monastic practices that existed in the fourth century are not so easily categorized. The story that has been told is not so much an historical account as it is a *pastiche* of literary artifacts taken largely from the *Life of Antony*, Jerome's ascetic works and other early monastic literature. It is therefore derived from a genre of monastic literature that accentuated the eremitical hero to the point of excluding more common forms of monastic life. As such, the story is more a part of the history of early monasticism than a description of it.

A REVISION OF THE STORY

In order to examine the nature of Cassian's monastic formation, it is necessary to revise this story. While it is beyond the scope of this work to offer a complete history of early Egyptian monasticism, it is important to address three fundamental claims that are relevant to the interpretation of Cassian's monastic theology: that there was a strong division between native Coptic and foreign Greek monks in Egypt; that there were only two legitimate forms of monastic life practiced in Egypt; and that most Egyptian monks were inherently suspicious of sophisticated theological expressions of the monastic vocation.

Copt and Greek

The supposed division between Coptic monks (those Egyptians preserving their native culture and language) and Greek monks (either foreigners or Hellenized Egyptians) rests partly on claims about Egyptian society as a whole. It has traditionally been argued that the spread of Greek language and culture in Egypt followed the same course as Ptolemaic and later Roman administration: from its fountainhead in Alexandria it flowed up the Nile to the metropolitan cities and then, at a much diminished level, to the smaller towns and villages. The penetration of Greek into the countryside and especially into southern Egypt would have been very limited and, on the few occasions where native and Hellenized Egyptians would meet, the dominance of those who spoke Greek would have been firmly established.

One could therefore imagine that Christianity was received first by Hellenistic Jews and other Greek-speaking peoples, and only later by native Egyptians. As such, Christianity would have been seen as the religion of the dominant minority and a threat to traditional Egyptian culture. Instinctively suspicious of Greek interlopers, native Egyptian converts to Christianity slowly carved out an independent church marked by the use of a new written form of Egyptian (Coptic) and an aversion to anything resembling the speculative theology prevalent in Alexandria. Egyptian monasticism, arising first among illiterate peasants such as Antony, was hostile to Greek language and education and (with Antony being the noted exception) fiercely independent of the patriarch of Alexandria. Despite Athanasius' attempts to co-opt the monastic movement for his own purposes, underlying linguistic and cultural differences eventually gave way to open theological dispute in which the Egyptian monks sided with their national church against their Greek patriarch.

It is indeed true that, at least in its early years, Egyptian Christianity was for the most part a sect within the large and prosperous Jewish community.¹⁶ As such, the early Christians enjoyed close ties with the Judaeo-Christian communities in Palestine and bore the mark of the Hellenistic culture that many diaspora Jews had embraced.¹⁷ It is not long, however, before contemporary scholarship begins to diverge from the traditional story. While most of

Egypt's Jewish population did reside in Alexandria, many Jews had settled further south, enabling Christianity to spread rapidly southward as well. Moreover, the Jewish community in Egypt suffered greatly after its revolt against Trajan (115-117) and this compelled Christians in Egypt to forge an identity independent of their Jewish forebears.¹⁸ By the end

of the second century, evidence begins to appear of widespread and unstructured Christian communities throughout Egypt.¹⁹

Administration

It is also at the end of the second century that changes can be seen in the administration of Egypt. While Augustus had established a Roman prefect in Alexandria answerable only to the emperor, Septimius Severus moved away from this central administration to a greater reliance on the Egyptians themselves.²⁰ He extended considerable administrative authority to the metropolitan cities by allowing them to form their own councils, or *boulai*. While they had no legislative powers, these councils maintained the food supply and infrastructure of the cities, helped to supply the army, and ensured the collection of taxes.

Membership in these *boulai* entailed some risk, for the office-holders were responsible for making up any short-fall in the taxes out of their own pockets. Nevertheless, many thought the risk worth taking when these councils were first introduced.²¹ As the Empire increasingly fell into disarray during the third century, these offices became increasingly burdensome. The maintenance of the food supply became more difficult and many civic institutions began to decline.²² At least one attempt was made to incorporate wealthy villagers into the ranks of the *bouleutai* in order to relieve the burden of the position, but this apparently met with little success.²³

About this time one also begins to read more often of withdrawal (*anachoresis*) as a means of fleeing financial and

civic responsibilities. Both the economic turmoil of the Empire and the failure of the Severan reforms contributed to the distress of propertied and poor alike. Farmers began to abandon their land because they were unable to pay the taxes on it. Prominent citizens began to grow more aggressive in their attempts to avoid the liturgies that were imposed upon them. Land began to lie fallow and the population as a whole became more transient.²⁴ *Anachoresis* became a significant concern for both the Romans and the Egyptians. The Romans wanted to maintain the supply of grain that Egypt traditionally provided and the Egyptian villagers shared a corporate responsibility to ensure that Rome's demands were met. When people fled, the burden increased for those who remained. The imperial response was to offer a reward for the return of anchorites and to forbid towns and villages from harboring them. This resulted in poorer Egyptians becoming tied to their villages in a manner similar to *coloni* tied to their estates.²⁵

Bagnall has argued that "far from being crushing and steadily increasing, [the system of taxation] was moderate, fairly proportioned to normal productivity of land, and stable over a period of more than 250 years."²⁶ However, this does not address the manner in which the taxes were levied or who bore the principal responsibility for paying the tax. Boak and Youtie, for example, have noted a papyrus from 309/310 that complains of townsmen who plotted to burden yet another person in the town with an unfair proportion of the liturgies. Moreover, these same townsmen were sheltering others from having to pay any tax at all.²⁷ It is not difficult to imagine such machinations occurring fairly frequently as responsibilities

were placed more and more into the hands of local land-holders.²⁸

Diocletian again reorganized the administration of Egypt by weakening the *boulai* in favor of the administration of a single *logistes*, or *curator civitatis*, who was himself a townsman.²⁹ The financial administration of the surrounding countryside was reorganized in a piecemeal fashion and a new set of offices was created within the towns themselves. The effect of these changes was to link the administration of the countryside more directly with that of the towns and their principal citizens. As administration increasingly came to be accomplished through the liturgical responsibilities of the native Egyptians, Egyptian property owners in turn established closer relations with the imperial government.³⁰ The divisions between urban and rural became less distinct and the separation between local, native government and imperial administration became less clear.³¹ This has led Bagnall to conclude that “in a small village, it is not difficult to imagine that a quarter or a third of the adult male population had some liturgical appointment, even without taking compulsory labor into account. When villagers met the bureaucracy, then, it was themselves.”³²

The changing roles of native Egyptians in their government and the loss of a clear delineation between city and countryside make it difficult to imagine a significant percentage of Egyptians avoiding contact with Greek language and culture. The shifting administrative and social structures also make it difficult to claim that a clear hierarchy existed in which the most Hellenized would inevitably be dominant. Instead, the history of Roman Egypt suggests a

much more fluid society where dividing lines constantly shifted, if they could be drawn at all.

Language

This fluidity is reflected in the evolution of the Egyptian language. The Ptolemies had established Greek as the official language of the government, an act that quickly rendered Egyptian court scribes obsolete. This left the priesthood as the only significant institution capable of preserving Egyptian in written form. Using Demotic, a difficult script to write, the priesthood continued to serve as a producer and repository of written Egyptian. In the early stages of Roman rule the priesthood even received a boost, for Augustus sponsored building projects throughout Egypt and portrayed himself as the successor to the pharaohs.³³ Augustus also provided the priests with direct monetary support. This direct support came at a tremendous cost, however, for Augustus

also confiscated temple lands. In this way, he brought the priesthood under his direct influence and made it dependent upon the empire for its survival. When later emperors no longer felt dependent upon the priesthood to maintain stability in Egypt, they withdrew their financial support and the priesthood withered. There is no evidence of imperial sponsorship of Egyptian religious practices after Antoninus and no evidence of temples receiving money from the imperial administration after the middle of the third century.³⁴

The decline of the public role of the priesthood contributed to the decline of written Egyptian, at least as it was traditionally recorded in Demotic. A vicious cycle gradually developed in which the fading of the traditional priesthood from public view discouraged the already rare use of the Demotic script.

This in turn led to the further decline of the priesthood. From the middle of the first to the middle of the third centuries, it was generally necessary for Egyptian to be translated into Greek in order to be recorded.³⁵

The gradual disappearance of Demotic goes far toward explaining why the earliest Christian papyri are in Greek rather than in Egyptian. For most people, Greek was the only readily available written language. The use of Greek by Christian copyists does not necessarily indicate that Christianity was the province of an educated, Hellenized culture that existed apart from native Egyptian culture. In fact, most of the papyri that betray a definite Christian provenance are not written in educated or cultivated hands. The scripts instead suggest that the papyri were written by “tradesmen, farmers, minor government officials to whom knowledge of and writing in Greek was an essential skill, but who had few literary interests.”³⁶ Thus, rather than Christianity being the possession of an educated elite, linguistic and papyrological evidence suggests the rapid diffusion of Christianity into all levels of society. It also argues against Christianity being imposed by Hellenes from Alexandria. The Egyptian Church of the late-second and third centuries, which was prospering in Middle and Upper Egypt as well as in the Delta region, was “composed not so much of intellectuals or the wealthy as of ordinary men of the middle and lower classes.”³⁷

The decline of Demotic paved the way for various attempts to transliterate Egyptian into Greek characters and Coptic eventually triumphed. As Coptic came to be more widely used, it was taken up by Egyptian Christians for use in biblical and liturgical texts. Many of the earliest Coptic papyri

have a Christian provenance and Christianity gave impetus to the widespread use of the script. However, the use of Coptic in the liturgical life of the Egyptian church should not be taken to mean that Egyptian Christianity arose independently of or in hostility to its Greek-speaking counterpart. Coptic would have failed as a liturgical language if some form of Greek had not been common currency, for Coptic's numerous borrowings from Greek would otherwise have rendered the liturgy unintelligible. Moreover, Bagnall and others have demonstrated that Coptic was not the product of an educated or clerical elite deliberately attempting to cultivate a linguistic identity independent of Greek language and culture. It arose instead as a practical necessity within a largely bilingual *milieu* and functioned alongside Greek for several centuries.³⁸

Thus, contrary to the earlier view of late Roman Egypt, it is now possible to conclude that there was little hostility between the two linguistic groups. To be fair, Greek remained the language of the government and pejorative references to native Egyptians do appear, but the dissolution of traditional administrative and religious institutions tended to blur the distinctions between Egyptian and Greek. Egyptian religion had been waning since the Ptolemies, and its twilight was marked more by disuse than by the imposition of Hellenistic culture from above. Egyptians possessed considerable autonomy, especially at the local level, and there was extensive and varied interaction between the two linguistic groups. By the fourth century there is evidence of an Egyptian, rather than Greek, elite in the towns and villages.³⁹ While Egypt cannot be described as a wholly bilingual society, papyrological evidence does suggest that the use of Greek was widespread and that there was a significant overlap between the Greek and Egyptian communities.⁴⁰

By the beginning of the fourth century the Egyptian church resembled the society as a whole. There was not inherent within the church, just as there was not inherent within Egyptian society, an unbridgeable chasm between Greek and native. Christianity was not imposed from above, even in the South, and it was not a mechanism of social or economic exclusion. This revised description of Egyptian society and the church can also be applied to its monks. “The bilingualism of the fourth-century papyrus finds connected with monastic establishments certainly shows that literate members of these communities were bilingual, but it may also point to bilingualism as a widespread—but not universal—condition of life.”⁴¹ The fact that most of the monks were Egyptian does not mean that most were hostile to Greek language or culture.⁴²

Forms of Monastic Life

The second claim that must be addressed is that only two forms of monastic life were regarded as legitimate in Egypt: anchoretic and cenobitic. The earliest historical records suggest otherwise. The first recorded use of the term *monachos* provides a significant insight into the role of Christian monks in Egyptian society. The papyrus in which the term occurs describes a criminal assault to which a deacon and a monk were witnesses. *Monachos* is used in the papyrus in a straightforward manner, which has led E. Judge to conclude that the term was accepted as a title within legal, or at least conventional, discourse. Moreover, the fact that the monk was cited as a witness to a crime suggests that he would be available for any future proceedings.⁴³ It is therefore reasonable to assume that the *monachos* was not a dweller of the deep desert. Judge has gone even further to argue that the

monk's association with a deacon means that the former was associated with a local church.⁴⁴ This may not have been the case, for the meeting of the two may have been by chance, or the deacon may have been associated with a nearby monastery. Judge is correct, however, in his assertion that the monk was easily recognizable, readily available and likely connected with the village in some way. This would not have been unusual.

Other papyri reveal *apotaktikoi* (those who renounce), the more common term for monks, functioning within a wide variety of circumstances. They owned, inherited and bequeathed property; they rented rooms; and they appeared as both plaintiffs and defendants in civil and criminal cases.⁴⁵

It is tempting to dismiss these worldly monks as belonging to Jerome's *Remnuoth*, false monks who were regarded with scorn by the Christian community.⁴⁶ This dismissal would be inappropriate, however, for these *apotaktikoi* appear often in the papyri and their existence seems to have been readily accepted. Moreover, a brief look at the traditional sources of monastic history reveals that even properly delimited hermits and cenobites often played active roles in neighboring villages and towns.

The Pachomian communities, for example, were often established in the midst of populated areas.⁴⁷ This was in consonance with Pachomius' ideal of "an asceticism closely bound up with a sense of obligation toward other people," an obligation which entailed both relief of suffering and the evangelization of the countryside.⁴⁸ The Pachomian communities engaged in extensive economic activity, both to support themselves and to relieve the plight of the poor. They produced clothing, baskets and other goods both for

themselves and for public sale. They farmed their own land and hired themselves out as laborers. They received and managed extensive estates and farmed abandoned land.⁴⁹ The latter activity would have been of great assistance to the neighboring villages, for it would have helped to ease their corporate responsibilities. Since the monasteries were not free from taxation, they would have shared the burden with surrounding farmers. This extensive economic activity blurred the distinction between monastic community and wealthy estate, and Pachomian monks would have been a common sight in the surrounding region.

Nor was this sort of activity limited to the Pachomians. The *Historia monachorum* describes Oxyrhynchus as a veritable city of monks.⁵⁰ Apollo, although a hermit living in the desert, was nonetheless frequently of service to neighboring villages. He interfered with a pagan procession in order to convert a village.⁵¹ On more than one occasion he interceded between villages about to engage in armed combat over disputed boundaries.⁵² He also acted as a healer and provided relief to the poor during a famine.⁵³ Sarapion is described as both ruling a large community and managing a sizable rural estate.⁵⁴ The monks under his jurisdiction produced so much surplus food that they were able to ship some of it to Alexandria to relieve the poor in that city. The author of the *Historia monachorum* notes that all the monks whom he mentions gave alms to the poor.⁵⁵ While he records this activity to show the sanctity of the monks, his description goes far toward demonstrating that even hermits were not entirely isolated from the surrounding community. They interceded in crises, healed the sick, fed the poor and even helped to fend off the occasional wild animal.⁵⁶ Other sources

suggest much the same thing.⁵⁷ Evagrius Ponticus describes a monk who sold his Bible in order to help the poor and elsewhere writes of the need to give alms.⁵⁸ While there can be no doubt that Evagrius vigorously championed complete detachment from the distractions of urban life, he nevertheless acknowledged that this might not be possible.⁵⁹ Even the gnostic who has acquired the stillness necessary for the contemplation of divine mysteries is expected to receive guests hospitably and to care for the poor through alms and healing.⁶⁰ Palladius mentions the presence of Christian monks in and around Atribis and Arsinoe.⁶¹ The *Canones* of ps.-Athanasius also attest to urban monks.⁶²

The need for both anchorites and cenobites to support themselves is reflected throughout early monastic literature. Palladius describes the monks of Nitria as supporting themselves through the manufacture of cloth.⁶³ Palladius, Evagrius and the *Apophthegmata* record the presence of bursars to manage the economy of the monasteries.⁶⁴ The *Apophthegmata* provide further testimony to the economic affairs of the monks.⁶⁵ The monks traded with nearby towns and villages to obtain the necessities they could not produce themselves and to acquire the raw materials for their manufacturing.⁶⁶ They owned and cultivated fields, and hired themselves out to other land-owners during the harvest season.⁶⁷ John the Dwarf wove baskets and ropes and arranged for their transportation to market.⁶⁸ Poemen interceded in the affairs of a nearby town in a manner reminiscent of Apollo.⁶⁹ The layout and location of monastic cells also suggest economic activity. Cells often contained walled gardens, storage rooms, diversified living spaces and, in some cases, luxurious appointments.⁷⁰ Many communities

were located in or near suburbs in order to facilitate interaction with the general population.⁷¹

Trade was not sought for its own sake and in many instances the *Apophthegmata* celebrate those who managed to avoid such distractions. Although John the Dwarf engaged in manufacture and trade, for example, he is praised for the utterly detached manner in which he carried this out.⁷² Complete isolation was an option available to only a very few, however, and the more typical monk labored to support himself and his community in a manner similar to that of his previous life in a nearby village or town. Not surprisingly, this continuity of activity is reflected in monastic dwellings. Many of the cells that have been uncovered bear a strong resemblance to the houses that existed in the nearby villages.

The traditional view of Egyptian monks as illiterate peasants completely withdrawn from the larger world must therefore be revised. Most monks did not entirely abandon human intercourse. Many lived within towns and villages, and for others the desert was nothing more than the strip of wasteland that immediately adjoined cultivated fields. Some monks even inhabited pockets of desert in the midst of populated areas. Many retained ties with local churches and several assumed important roles in neighboring towns. Monks engaged in a wide range of economic activity and this variety suggests that they came from a wide range of backgrounds.

A Theology of the Monastic Life

Papyri and other sources can suggest the demographic composition of monastic communities and reveal the nature and extent of their economic activity. At times, the papyri can

even show the use of Greek within the communities. They cannot, however, describe the manner in which Greek language and culture helped to shape the method and content of monastic teaching. For this we must turn to how the monks described themselves and the lives that they led.

Antony and Origen

The *Letters* of Antony provide the best starting point. The *Life of Antony* describes Antony as unlearned, disinterested in school and opposed to philosophical discourse as a means of attaining wisdom.⁷³ Many scholars have largely accepted this description as definitive and have regarded the *Letters* as being of little value to understanding either Antony himself or early monasticism more generally.⁷⁴ However, Samuel Rubenson has recently challenged this view by showing that the *Letters* were composed in Coptic and deserve precedence over the *Life* as a source for the historical Antony.⁷⁵ While Antony's *Letters* are brief and leave many crucial terms undefined, their content is nevertheless sufficient to show that, contrary to the depiction of him in the *Life*, Antony was not hostile to all things Greek. Instead, the *Letters* reveal a Coptic hermit not only conversant with prevailing philosophical traditions, but also influenced by them in his epistemology, cosmology and anthropology.⁷⁶ The *Letters* therefore help to challenge the traditional claim of a division between illiterate Egyptian and educated Greek, or between Egyptian monks and the Hellenized church of Alexandria.

There now can be little doubt that the *Letters* were influenced by a popular Hellenizing world-view and a theological tradition emanating from Alexandria. Philosophical ideas were discussed among Egyptian monks writing in Coptic in

central and southern Egypt. Antony's understanding of spiritual knowledge would seem to have been influenced by a Platonic epistemology and his call for attention to and mastery of the self bears a Stoic stamp. While the brevity of the *Letters* make it difficult to trace the influence of any one text or author, they nevertheless echo the theology of Origen at key points.⁷⁷

Antony writes in his *Letters* that true knowledge consists of knowledge of God.⁷⁸ This knowledge is the basis of the equanimity of the soul, for the soul rests undisturbed only when it is in the presence of God.⁷⁹ Humanity, however, has been wounded by the fall and has lost this knowledge. The fall and our subsequent ignorance has opened a great chasm between us and God and has disturbed the original equanimity of our souls. The wound of our ignorance and the disturbance of our souls can be healed only by recovering the knowledge lost through the fall.⁸⁰ To enable us to recover this lost knowledge, God has provided three great dispensations: natural law, Mosaic law, and the coming of Christ.⁸¹ As the mind of God, Christ facilitates the restoration of the soul to God by mediating between our rational natures and the divine nature. Antony characterizes the restored unity of the soul as membership in Christ's body.⁸²

Because we are created in the image of God, knowledge of God begins with knowledge of ourselves.⁸³ In order to know ourselves truly and to recognize the image of God within us, we must resist the deleterious effects of our material bodies and cultivate our rational natures. We must be attentive to ourselves by purifying our bodies, quelling the interior movements of our souls and living in harmony with reason.⁸⁴

A rational life requires discernment, which enables us to distinguish not only good from bad, but what is real from what is unreal.⁸⁵ Rather than as a means of punishing the body because it is the source of sin or an opportunity to share in the suffering of Christ, Antony describes asceticism as the process of purification necessary to know oneself and God. In Rubenson's terms, Antony's asceticism is a "method of purification of the body and soul in order to bring them into harmony and regain man's natural condition."⁸⁶

Antony's emphasis on attention to oneself in order to know God recalls the theology of Origen. In his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, for example, Origen comments on the verse beginning "Unless you know yourself"—*nisi cognoveris te* in Rufinus' translation. In the course of his commentary Origen describes the bridegroom "establishing the height of salvation and blessedness in the knowledge and understanding of oneself."⁸⁷ Self-knowledge, according to Origen, is the first stage of an ascent of the soul that culminates in knowledge of the Trinity, which is the "principal function of knowledge."⁸⁸

Origen describes self-knowledge as having two aspects. The first is knowledge of the internal movements of our soul, such as our emotions and the motives for our actions. Exploring these movements contributes to a process of purification. Through the *praxis* of reflecting on our behavior and conforming our emotions and our actions to what we know to be true, we transcend our carnal appetites and gradually restore the proper constitution of our soul.⁸⁹ This restoration cannot be complete, however, without the second aspect of self-knowledge, which is knowledge of our soul's nature and cause of being. Self-examination and purification lead us to discover not only our sin, but also the glory of our being

created in the image of God. Recognition of our own creation in the image of God leads to knowledge of our creator, and it is our likeness to God that allows us to have knowledge of him. Origen therefore links introspection with revelation, for self-knowledge is inspired by and leads to God.

Spiritual Exercises and Christian Philosophy

Despite the similarities between the two theologians' understanding of self-knowledge, however, Origen need not have been the immediate source of Antony's views. The practice of "spiritual exercises" as a means of self-knowledge was common to late ancient philosophy more generally. While different philosophical traditions, such as Stoicism and Platonism, made different cosmological and epistemological claims, they were nonetheless united in regarding philosophy as a manner of knowing as well as a means for acquiring knowledge. Pierre Hadot has shown that late ancient philosophy itself was regarded as a spiritual exercise, or as an "activité intérieure de la pensée et de la volonté."⁹⁰ The goal of philosophy was not merely to acquire knowledge, but to form oneself so that one can live according to reason. Stoicism, for example, recommended an interior discipline which entailed attention to one-self in order to examine one's conscience and to discern what is right and wrong.⁹¹ Central to this idea is attention to one's present situation, which Hadot has summarized as "control of one's thoughts, acceptance of the divine will, and the purification of one's intentions with regard to others."⁹² While this notion was developed within a Christian context by Origen among others, it transcends any one tradition.⁹³

Attention to oneself and to the present is found in the *Life of Antony* as well as in his *Letters*. As Antony first began to withdraw from society, he struggled to forget his previous circumstances.⁹⁴ Having removed himself to the tomb, Antony imagined himself daily beginning his monastic practice anew.⁹⁵ On his deathbed Antony counseled his closest followers to live as though each day were their last.⁹⁶ This same theme also appears in the *Apophthegmata* and in Cassian's monastic writings. Echoing Antony's need to forget the past, Cassian describes a monk who burned letters from his home without reading them in order to remain attentive to the present rather than to the past.⁹⁷ When speaking of fasting, Cassian evokes the theme of Antony's final words by counseling monks to fast as though they might live 100 years (that is, not to harm themselves through excessive fasting), but also to live as though each day might be their last.⁹⁸

The understanding of philosophical study as a spiritual exercise had a significant impact upon methods of instruction. Philosophical instruction was often regarded as spiritual guidance in which dialogue between teacher and student played a major role. While the teacher was expected to impart an understanding of the world and of humanity's role within it, he was also expected to encourage the self-awakening of his student. Philosophical dialogue was an exercise in which the student submitted to reason and found truth in the depths of his soul.⁹⁹ Hadot has argued that the oral nature of philosophical instruction was crucial to the cultivation of the self, for "only the spoken word makes dialogue possible, that is, it makes it possible for the disciple to discover the truth himself amid the interplay of questions and answers and also for the master to adapt his teaching to the needs of the disciple."¹⁰⁰ When written texts were required, they were

often composed in a way that attempted to reproduce at least in part the personal relationship between the teacher and the student. Philosophical texts were therefore rarely systematic in the modern sense of the term. Stoics, for example, often employed aphorisms and

exempla in order to encourage the internalization of an idea.¹⁰¹ The oral nature of philosophical instruction was further enhanced by the fact that students were not alone in their responsibility for self-examination. The authority of the teacher rested precisely on his own ability to live the life he recommended for his students. He taught by example as well as by word.¹⁰²

Teaching and Learning in the Egyptian Desert

One can discern many of these same elements in Antony's *Letters*. In them, Antony frequently calls for the self-awakening of his correspondents, encouraging them to know themselves so that they might know God.¹⁰³ He also describes the path to true knowledge as a process of purification. While the *Letters* cannot be described as a dialogue, Antony does attempt to cultivate a relationship between himself and his reader based on love and respect. He also appeals to his own experience as the source of his authority. Like his pagan counterparts, it was necessary for Antony to live the life he recommended for others.¹⁰⁴

The *Letters* are not the only monastic texts that reveal an interest in the relationship between teacher and student. The *Apophthegmata* show that this relationship was also a concern in the communities of Nitria, Kellia, and Scetis. When describing monastic instruction in the Egyptian desert, Guy has identified three principal features: the need for an elder in

the formation of a beginner, an apprenticeship based on experience, and the exposure of one's thoughts to the elder.¹⁰⁵ While the patterns of monastic life revealed in the *Apophthegmata* were quite varied, Guy has argued that the method of education was virtually universal. The basis of the teaching relationship was the absolute obedience that the disciple owed to his *abba*. The *abba* was not simply the disciple's superior; he was the disciple's spiritual director. Instruction was highly personal and the elder's advice often varied according to the needs of the advisee. The elder was to use "his gift of spiritual discernment to adapt each of his prescriptions to the needs and capacities of his disciple."¹⁰⁶ For his part, the disciple was expected to expose all his thoughts to his elder in order that they might be examined. His trust in the elder was to be complete. Only gradually would the disciple learn to discern his own thoughts.¹⁰⁷

More recently, Graham Gould has considered the teaching relationship among the desert fathers as one of many forms of interaction revealed in the *Apophthegmata*. He agrees with Guy that the teaching relationship "was a personal relationship which made great demands on the *abba* and his disciple alike."¹⁰⁸ He also accepts Guy's claim that the disciple owed absolute obedience to his elder, but qualifies this by showing that if the relationship were to prove unfruitful, then the disciple was free to look for a new *abba*.¹⁰⁹ Gould surpasses Guy, however, by suggesting that the responsibilities of the *abba* went beyond the proper discernment of his disciple's needs to the regulation of his own conduct.¹¹⁰

The nature of instruction described in the *Apophthegmata* and articulated by Guy and Gould are markedly similar to those of late ancient philosophy more generally. In both instances, teaching took place “in the context of a personal relationship.”¹¹¹ Both traditions were concerned with the student’s life and moral development as well as the imparting of knowledge. Both devised methods of instruction that allowed for meditation and rumination. One therefore cannot easily separate the instruction of the desert fathers from the *milieu* in which it arose, just as one cannot easily isolate the content of the instruction. This is not to suggest that the method of instruction found in Antony’s *Letters* or in the *Apophthegmata* was derived solely from Stoic or other philosophical instruction. It is intended merely to challenge Guy’s claim that the desert fathers had developed “an altogether original method of education.”¹¹²

READING EVAGRIUS PONTICUS

Perhaps the best example of the nature of monastic instruction is the *corpus* of Evagrius Ponticus. The son of a chorepiscopus in Pontus, Evagrius was ordained lector by Basil of Caesarea and deacon by Gregory Nazianzen. He later travelled to Constantinople with Gregory, where he served as archdeacon.¹¹³ Evagrius learned philosophy and sacred scripture under Gregory, and it was probably Gregory who introduced Evagrius to the work and theology of Origen.¹¹⁴ After Gregory's retirement, Evagrius remained in Constantinople and developed a reputation as a skillful debater with heretics.¹¹⁵ At prayer one evening, Evagrius had a vision that warned him away from his love for the wife of a high official, and within twenty-four hours he took leave of the capital.¹¹⁶ He eventually arrived at the monastic community at the Mount of Olives, which was governed by Melania the Elder and Rufinus of Aquileia. While there Evagrius became extremely ill. Melania nursed him back to health and convinced him to take monastic vows.¹¹⁷ Evagrius remained at the Mount for two years before departing for Egypt.

After arriving in Egypt Evagrius maintained a correspondence with both Melania and Rufinus.¹¹⁸ Palladius would seem to have played a significant role in this, for he most likely served as Evagrius' messenger.¹¹⁹ Later in his career, Evagrius returned briefly to the Mount of Olives to seek refuge from Theophilus, who had threatened to ordain him bishop of Thmuis.¹²⁰ Evagrius spent two years at Nitria and then fourteen at Kellia, dying on Epiphany, 399.¹²¹ While in Egypt Evagrius became associated with a group of monks known for

their fondness for Origen. These monks were led by Ammonius, the Tall Brothers and, according to Palladius, Evagrius himself.¹²²

Evagrius composed several works and many of these are small collections of *logoi* or aphorisms. These collections have often been characterized as without order; as possessing discernible themes but no discernible structure. Despite this characterization, many of Evagrius' works show signs of having been intricately constructed. In his extensive study of the *Sententiae ad monachos*, for example, Jeremy Driscoll has shown that Evagrius carefully linked *logoi* together to form a coherent summary of the spiritual life.¹²³ Driscoll

further argues that this is Evagrius' most complete work, for in it he surveys the spiritual life from an incipient fear of the Lord to the contemplation of the Trinity.¹²⁴ Driscoll's approach is promising and deserves to be applied to other of Evagrius' works.

Although it is not as comprehensive as the *Sententiae ad monachos*, Evagrius' *De oratione* shows similar signs of being structured in the form of a spiritual ascent. The work begins with the need for compunction and purity and moves on to consider the various obstacles to prayer. It eventually ascends to a discussion of the nature of pure prayer. The work is premised on the notion that the reader is progressing in his own spiritual life as he progresses through the text. Transitions from one topic to another are often marked, and it is assumed that the reader has mastered what has been read before going on. When he first introduces true prayer, for example, Evagrius cautions that if the reader cannot remain focused during prayer, then he still prays as one attached to the world rather than as a monk.¹²⁵ When discussing the

dangers that assail the mind at the height of prayer, he writes as though the reader has already made significant progress toward this goal.¹²⁶ Evagrius later expresses his hope that the reader has achieved the full gift of prayer and counsels patience if he has not.¹²⁷ Evagrius' aphorisms encourage intensive study and rumination. The reader is not to go on to the next until he has mastered the last.

The role which memorization plays in reading Evagrius' texts can be seen in the guarded and coded language that he frequently uses. He often alludes to key elements of his thought through cryptic and even incomprehensible references to them. Only later, or perhaps in a different work entirely, will the references be explained. As the reader progresses through the text, and eventually through Evagrius' entire *corpus*, he will return to key terms and concepts many times. He will thereby be forced to consider the terms in a new light. The depth and richness of the terms grow in proportion to the reader's capacity for understanding.

An example of this is Evagrius' description of the *logismoi*, or evil thoughts, as children. In his *Sententiae ad monachos*, Evagrius echoes Psalm 137 (136):9 when he writes: "He who completely destroys evil thoughts in his heart, he is like the one who dashes his children against the rock."¹²⁸ Evagrius also refers to children in his *Rerum monachalium rationes*. There, he cites Jeremiah 16.4, which prohibits Jeremiah from fathering children. Evagrius explains that the children whom Jeremiah mentioned signify not only human children but also the desires of the flesh, for they are the sons and daughters of the heart.¹²⁹ In his *Scholia in psalmos*, Evagrius sheds more light on the matter. He reinforces the idea that children signify evil thoughts and also explains that the rock against

which they are dashed is the doctrine of Christ.¹³⁰ A similar chain explains the different dimensions of “rock” as a metaphor for Christ. Yet another example is how Evagrius describes the shield of faith that quenches flaming arrows. He takes up this Pauline image in his *Sententiae ad monachos* when he writes: “A flaming arrow ignites the soul, but the man *oipraktike* will extinguish it.”¹³¹ In the *Kephalaia gnostica* Evagrius explains that the arrows are evil thoughts which are formed in the passionate part of the soul.¹³² In the *Practicus* we read that *praxis* is the method of purifying the passionate part of the soul.¹³³

The reader is not expected to have all of Evagrius’s works at hand so that he might cross-reference these terms. Instead, the terms and the aphorisms are to be memorized over a long period of time. The meanings of the text, and hence the depth of Evagrius’ monastic teaching, will be revealed only slowly. A text that has been learned, or even memorized without being understood, will gradually be explained as the student progresses. The use of aphorisms allows Evagrius to interweave introspection and practical advice in a spiralling manner in which the reader, when he moves on to a new aspect of the spiritual life, is already expected to have mastered the former.

Using aphorisms in this way also allows for the simultaneous discussion of several themes, which reflects the complex personality of a reader whose spiritual life cannot be compartmentalized in convenient linear categories. In a manner similar to the philosophical instruction described above, the reader is to explore every aspect of his emotional and spiritual life. The manner in which the reader is to read

and memorize Evagrius' aphorisms has led Driscoll to describe the *Sententiae ad monachos*, which is a collection of sayings, as a model dialogue. He concludes that the text "can hold no interest for the reader who does not accept the proverbs as invitations to dialogue."¹³⁴

This approach to Evagrius' *corpus* does not differ greatly from his approach to the Bible, for the Bible also possesses many levels of meaning that can only be mastered after a long period of prayer and study.¹³⁵ Both texts also require the practical application of their principles for their meaning to be grasped. The goal of scriptural interpretation is to establish a unity between the principles in the text and the life of the reader. "It is *through* the fulfillment of the text in one's life that the text expresses its full transformative power."¹³⁶ A monk therefore cannot claim to have mastered a text, either biblical or Evagrian, until he has successfully applied it to his life. In each case, the text must engage the reader and transform him, thereby leading him to a deeper awareness of himself and of God.

There is an inherent irony in Evagrius' *corpus*, however, in that the community which provided the basis for these writings in some ways would have been antithetical to them. I am not here referring to the supposed anti-intellectualism revealed in the *Apophthegmata*, which can easily be explained by the fact that the sayings were collected after the Origenist and other theological controversies. These later writings are evidence of a wariness of theological speculation that was not such a force in the latter part of the fourth century. Nor do I wish to suggest that Evagrius was not read in Egypt. O'Laughlin, for example, cites evidence that Evagrius was read in Scetis.¹³⁷ Guillaumont goes so far as to

suggest that Evagrius' *De oratione* was the flash point for the Origenist controversy, for it attacks the visualization of God during prayer, a practice common among some of the monks in the region.¹³⁸

I am instead referring to the fundamentally oral nature of the desert communities. Study required a guide. It was not to be undertaken alone. The beginner did not possess the discernment necessary to assess his progress. He therefore could not have heeded Evagrius' warnings not to proceed before mastering what had already been read. It was the *abba's* task to evaluate the condition of his disciple and discern his needs. The *abba* would diagnose what ailed his disciple and provide the remedy. Moreover, the disciple was to show some indication that he was prepared to follow the advice of the *abba*.¹³⁹ Without such a demonstration, the *logos* would be ineffective and, eventually, the *abba* would cease to function effectively as a spiritual guide.

Why, then, did Evagrius write? The works he composed required keys for their interpretation and the immediate possessors of these keys would have had little use for the books themselves. The community itself served as a repository of wisdom and experience that could be "read" and discussed, and the *abba* could provide his disciple with what he needed to know.

The answer to the question lies in the identity of Evagrius' addressees. Considerable evidence points to an extensive correspondence between Evagrius and the monastery on the Mount of Olives. Gabriel Bunge has shown that several of Evagrius' letters were addressed to Melania and Rufinus as well as John of Jerusalem, a patron of the community on the

Mount. At least two of Evagrius' ascetic works were addressed to them, as well as an epistolary discourse on theology.¹⁴⁰ The link between Evagrius and the Mount of Olives is made even more clear by Rufinus' translation of the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, which betrays an affinity for the Evagrian understanding of the monastic life, and by Rufinus' translations of Evagrius himself.

The Mount of Olives would have been one of the few monastic communities outside Egypt that could have "unlocked" Evagrius' corpus. Melania had resided for some time among the monks of Nitria and had sheltered them at Diocaesarea during their exile from Egypt under Valens.¹⁴¹ At Jerusalem, she continued her immersion in the works of Origen, Didymus the Blind, and other writers who provided the intellectual foundation of "Origenist" monasticism.¹⁴² Rufinus, too, had lived among the Egyptians and claimed to have studied under Didymus the Blind for six years.¹⁴³ Thus, both leaders were familiar with monastic life at Nitria and attempted to emulate at least some aspects of it on the Mount of Olives. They also shared with the Nitrians a common exegetical and speculative tradition based on Origen and developed by Didymus and the monks themselves. Melania and Rufinus therefore possessed the same interpretative keys as the Nitrian monks. The two, along with their more senior disciples, could have served as the *ammās* and *abbas* who interpreted the needs of the less advanced in their community and provided the gradual revelation that was necessary for their growth.

If this answer should be accepted, yet other questions must be posed. If Evagrius' teaching could be grasped by only a

closely knit and similarly trained group of monks, how could it be conveyed to those outside this group?

How could one represent in a written text a method of instruction that was dependent upon the personal relationship between master and disciple? As will be seen below, one method that Cassian used to overcome this enormous difficulty was to attempt to recreate as far as he could the dialogue between *abba* and disciple as an experience of reading. Before this can be examined in more detail, however, we must first become familiar with the context in which he wrote.

NOTES

1. The following account is derived from a number of studies and represents a traditional view of the origin of Christian monasticism. The account merely indicates the direction many previous studies have taken and is in no way a detailed survey of scholarship in the field.
2. For this two-fold image of the desert, Guillaumont, "Conception," 3-21.
3. Hardy, *Egypt*, 90; De Clerq, "Influence," 169-176; Spidlik, *Spirituality*, 21.
4. Chitty, *Desert*, 32; Byrne, "Cenobitic," 282.
5. Baus, *Reichskirche*, 378; Clark, *Origenist*, 56-57.
6. Griggs, *Egyptian*, 201.
7. Lorenz, "Anfänge," 1-2.

8. Baus, *Reichskirche*, 390-391.
9. Baus, *Reichskirche*, 398.
10. Byrne, "Cassian," 4-5.
11. Lorenz, "Anfänge," 35.
12. Courtois, "Evolution," 53.
13. J. F. Kelly, "Gallic," 506.
14. Frend, "Paulinus," 10. Bardy, "Occident," 86-104, challenges this view.
15. E.g., Antin, "Monachisme," 108-109.
16. Pace Klijn, "Jewish Christianity," 161-175, who argues that there was more theological and ethnic variety in the early Alexandrian communities.
17. Roberts' analysis of Christian *nomina sacra* provides much of the evidence for the spread of Christianity among the Jewish population. *Manuscript*, 26-48.
18. For the devastation of both the Jewish and the Gentile populations that resulted from these revolts, Smallwood, *Jews*, 393-412.
19. Roberts, *Manuscript*, 71.
20. Bowman, *Town Councils*, 126-127.

21. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 55-56.
22. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 59-61.
23. Lewis, *Life*, 49-50.
24. Rubenson, *Letters*, 93.
25. Boak, "Flight," 327-329.
26. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 172.
27. Boak, "Flight," 332-337.
28. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 56, n. 71.
29.
Bowman, "Some Aspects," 43.
30. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 62-63; Bowman, "Some Aspects," 51.
31. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 3-13.
32. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 136; Bowman, "Some Aspects," 45.
33. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 262; Lewis, *Life*, 15.
34. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 267-268.
35. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 237-238.
36. Roberts, *Manuscript*, 21.
37. Roberts, *Manuscript*, 25.

38. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 238.
39. Wipszycka, “Monachisme,” 41.
40. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 7, concludes that “it is no longer possible to suppose that the Hellenistic culture of Alexandria inspired only a few Greek-speaking notables in the southern *metropoleis* and confirmed a sharp distinction between people of their standing and the Egyptian peasantry.” Also Bagnall, *Egypt*, 259.
41. Bagnall, *Egypt*, 245.
42. Wipszycka, “Monachisme,” 41, suggests that the division between Origen’s supporters and detractors lay in their allegiance to Theophilus rather than in their native language or level of literacy.
43. Judge, “Earliest,” 72-89.
44. Judge, “Earliest,” 73-74.
45. Judge, “Fourth-Century,” 619. This article lists and describes the contents of papyri which mention *apotaktikoi* and *monachoi*.
46. Jerome, *Ep.* 22.34.
47. Wipszycka, “Monachisme,” 11-14, suggests that by the end of the fourth century a community founded along Pachomian lines was present in Alexandria itself.
48. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 65.

49. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 153-158. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 32, also describes the different trades plied by the Tabennesiotes, although at a later date than the sources cited in Rousseau.
50. *Historia monachorum* 5.
51. *Historia monachorum* 8.26-29.
52. *Historia monachorum* 8.30-31, 36-37.
53. *Historia monachorum* 8.7, 44-47.
54. *Historia monachorum* 18.1.
55. *Historia monachorum* 18.3.
56. Bes saved farmers from a rampaging hippopotamus and a crocodile on different occasions. *Historia monachorum* 4.3. Elias healed the sick. *Ibid.* 7.2.
57. Goehring, "World," 134-144, and Wipszycka, "Monachisme," 1-44, describe the presence of ascetics within cities.
58. Evagrius, *Practicus* 97, for the story; *Gnosticus* 7, *Ad monachos* 25, 29, and *Antirrheticus* 3.37 for the need to give alms.
59. Evagrius, *Rerum* 6, for the need to avoid distraction; *Practicus* 41, and *Ad monachos* 83, for proper conduct while in a village.

60. Evagrius, *Gnosticus* 7, 22, 33.
61.
Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 29.1; 58.1; 59.1.
62. Wipszycka, “Monachisme,” 8-9.
63. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 7.5.
64. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 10.3; Evagrius, *Gnosticus* 30; *Apophthegmata* Anoub 1.
65. For a discussion of monastic economic activity, Chitty, *Desert*, 34; Goehring, “World,” 139.
66. *Apophthegmata* Agathon 27, 30; Isidore the Priest 7; Macarius 30; Poemen 10, 163.
67. *Apophthegmata* Benjamin 1; John the Dwarf 35; Macarius 7; Pion 1.
68. *Apophthegmata* John the Dwarf 5, 30-31; Goehring, “World,” 139.
69. *Apophthegmata* Poemen 9.
70. *Site monastique*, 21-27; Husson, “L’habitat,” 191-207.
71. Wipszycka, “Monachisme,” 35.
72. *Apophthegmata* John the Dwarf 5, 30-31.

73. *Vita Antonii* 1, 72-73, 79-80. Jerome found this image so striking that he attempted to co-opt it in his *Vita Pauli*. See below, Chap. 3.

74. Gribomont, “Review,” 50, noted the possible significance of the Letters many years ago in his review of Garitte’s edition, but his argument was not widely accepted at the time.

75. Rubenson, *Letters*, 15-42; accepted by Barnes, “Review,” 724.

76. Rubenson, *Letters*, 59-88.

77. That the *Letters* are insufficient to prove a direct link to Origen, Barnes, “Review,” 727.

78. Antony, *Ep.* 6.4. The *Letters* are numbered according to their arrangement in *PG* 40.

79. Antony, *Ep.* 2.1, 4.1.

80. Antony, *Ep.* 1.7, 2.2, 5.2, 6.2.

81. Antony, *Ep.* 2.2, 6.1.

82. Antony, *Ep.* 2.9, 4.2.

83. Antony, *Ep.* 6.1, 4; 7.

84. Antony, *Ep.* 1.2-4.

85. Antony, *Ep.* 4.3.

86. Rubenson, *Letters*, 139.
87. “Summam salutis et beatitudinis in scientia et agnitione constituit.” Origen, *Comm, in cant.* 2.5.6.
88. “Igitur principale munus scientiae est agnoscere Trinitatem, secundo vero in loco cognoscere creaturam eius.” Origen, *Comm, in cant.* 2.5.20.
89. Origen, *Comm, in cant.* 2.5.17.
90. P. Hadot, *Exercices*, 61.
91. P. Hadot, *Exercices*, 19-21.
92. P. Hadot, *Philosophy*, 132
93. P. Hadot, *Exercices*, 69-70. For a survey of the sources of various Christian understandings of self-knowledge, Courcelle, *Connais-tois*, vol. 1, *passim*.
94. Athanasius, *Vita s. Antonii* 3.
95. Athanasius, *Vita s. Antonii* 7.
96. Athanasius, *Vita s. Antonii* 91.
97. *Inst.* 5.32.1-3.
98. *Inst.* 5.41.
99.
P. Hadot, *Exercices*, 36.

100. P. Hadot, *Philosophy*, 62.
101. “The written works of this period remain closely tied to oral conduct.” P. Hadot, *Philosophy*, 62.
102. I. Hadot, “Spiritual Guide,” 448-449.
103. Antony, *Ep.* 6.1,4; 7.
104. Rubenson, *Letters*, 63.
105. Guy, “Educational,” 44-51.
106. Guy, “Educational,” 47.
107. Guy, “Educational,” 49.
108. Gould, *Desert Fathers*, 25.
109. Gould, *Desert Fathers*, 73-74. Considerable thought went into dissolving the teaching relationship, however, for the disciple had to be sure that the urge to leave arose from a genuine risk of harm rather than from an assertion of self-will.
110. Gould, *Desert Fathers*, 58-63.
111. Gould, *Desert Fathers*, 26. I. Hadot, “Spiritual Guide,” 445, asserts that “philosophical instruction was necessarily most efficient when it was based on a personal and friendly intercourse between student and teacher.”
112. Guy, “Educational,” 45.

113. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 38.2.
114. Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.30.8. O’Laughlin, “Origenism,” 13-14, 26, argues that Gregory trained Evagrius from a young age.
115. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 38.2.
116. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 38.3-7; Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.30.9.
117. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 38.8-9.
118. Bunge, “Origenismus,” 35-39; *Briefe*, 33Iff.
119. O’Laughlin, “Origenism,” 60-63.
120. O’Laughlin, “Origenism,” 64.
121. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 38.10,13.
122. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 11.4; 24; 35. O’Laughlin, “Origenism,” 59, has argued that “it was characteristic of this group that they maintained greater contact with the outside world, especially with Alexandria and Palestine.” Regnault, *Vie*, 35-36, basing his argument on their apparent willingness to engage in theological speculation, has proposed that these monks stood outside the tradition of the desert fathers that is revealed in the *Apophthegmata*. These claims are not tenable, however, for they are predicated upon an assumption that native Egyptian monks were strongly opposed to Greek thought in general and to Origen in particular, an assumption that must now be questioned.

123. Driscoll, “Key,” 361-392, for a summary of his research.
124. Driscoll, “Key,” 361.
125. Evagrius, *De oratione* 44.
126. Evagrius, *De oratione* 49.
127. Evagrius, *De oratione* 87.
128. Evagrius, *Sententiae ad monachos* 45. Translations of the *Sententiae* are taken from Driscoll, *The Ad monachos/45-70*.
129.
Evagrius, *Rerum* 1.
130. Evagrius, *Scholia in psalmos* 136.9.
131. Ephesians 6:16. Evagrius, *Sententiae ad monachos* 70.
132. Evagrius, *Kephalaia gnostica* 6.53; For this link, Driscoll, *The ‘Ad monachos’* 256, n. 44.
133. Evagrius, *Pradius* 78.
134. Driscoll, *The ‘Ad monachos’* 368.
135. For the levels of meaning in scripture corresponding to the stages of the spiritual life, Géhin, “L’Exégèse Evagrienne,” in *Schol. in Prov.*, 28.

136. Burton-Christie, *Word*, 217; also 135.
137. O’Laughlin, “Origenism,” 67.
138. Guillaumont, *Les ‘Kephalaia’* 66.
139. “The predisposition of those who came to hear a word from the elder deeply affected the kind and power of the words which the elder would speak. Only those who showed a willingness to take the words seriously, to put them into practice, would find the verbal treasures which they sought.” Burton-Christie, *Word*, 157, referring especially to *Apophthegmata* Theodore of Pherme 3, 9; Ares 1; Felix 1. Also, Gould, *Desert Fathers*, 87.
140. These are the *Sententiae ad monachos* > *Ad virginem* and the *Epistula ad Melaniam*. Bunge, “Origenismus,” 35-39; Driscoll, *The Ad monachos*/ 39-43.
141. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 46.3-4.
142. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 55.
143. Rufinus, *Apologia* 2.12,15.

CHAPTER 3

Western Perceptions of Egyptian Monasticism

The story of ancient monasticism that began the previous chapter is very much a western story. Although it has its roots in Egypt, and Egyptian practices are described as normative, the story nevertheless flowered most fully among Latin-speaking Christians. The story appealed to the West because it satisfied the strong desire of many Christians to find roots within a continuing tradition. The gulf between the apostolic and the imperial church had come to be keenly felt, especially after the triumph of Christianity under Theodosius.¹ The Egyptian monks were often portrayed as successors to the apostles, for they had preserved unblemished the purity of the apostolic church.² The story also appealed to the West because it came at a time when the beleaguered cause of monasticism was encountering strong opposition from both pagans and Christians. By tracing the history of monasticism to the very beginning of the Christian tradition, proponents of the monastic life could parry what was perhaps their critics' most powerful thrust: that monasticism was a recent aberration concocted by extreme and irrational zealots.³ Finally, the story helped to classify and assess monastic practices and imposed order on the variety of rules and communities that had arisen. By limiting the origins of monasticism to Egypt and by describing Egyptian practices as normative, monastic writers offered a clear pedigree of orthodox monastic practices. By telling the story of past heroes, they could shape monks' present way of life. In a sense, narrating the past allowed monastic writers to control their present.

THE *LIVES* OF ANTONY AND PAUL

This is perhaps most evident in the western reception of the *Life of Antony*. By representing the stages of Antony's withdrawal as corresponding to the stages of his spiritual development, the *Life* firmly established exterior solitude as a metaphor for interior purity.⁴ When studying the practices of other ascetics, Antony passed from being a novice to one capable of withstanding the assaults of demons.⁵ After he withdrew from people to dwell in a tomb, Antony mastered carnal desire, survived physical demonic attack and was proclaimed by God as truly holy.⁶ The *Life* offers Antony's abandonment of the tomb and entry into the desert as proof of his holiness.⁷ In the desert Antony challenged the devil in his own abode and received an unsurpassed spiritual wisdom in return. Antony's own *Letters* and a more complete knowledge of Egyptian monastic life significantly challenge this description of monasticism as a continuing quest for solitude. Nevertheless, western readers largely unfamiliar with events in Egypt and wholly ignorant of Antony's *Letters* came to regard the portrayal of Antony in the *Life* as normative. The *Life's* association of solitude with interior purity captured readers' imaginations and accounts of Antony's extreme self-deprivation contributed to a fascination with extreme asceticism that would come to border on voyeurism.

Translated into two different Latin versions, the *Life's* popularity stemmed at least partly from the forceful personality of its purported author.⁸ Athanasius had resided in Rome during one of his periodic exiles from Alexandria.⁹ Accompanied by at least two monks, his entourage made a

lasting impression. The image of Christian perfection that Athanasius offered in his narrative could not easily be challenged by those who wished to offer a different view of monastic life.

Jerome is an example of this, for he found it necessary to co-opt and modify the vision set forth in the *Life of Antony* rather than supplant it. He even attempted to forge a link between himself and Athanasius by means of the Roman matron Marcella. Jerome wrote that Athanasius had inspired Marcella to dedicate herself to holy widowhood.¹⁰ Four decades later, Jerome ingratiated himself into the company of this same Marcella as well as a group of widows and virgins who met with her regularly to pray and study the Bible. Linking Marcella to Athanasius provided a pedigree for Marcella's ascetic practices, which were regarded by many as scandalous, and established a connection between Athanasius and Jerome himself. Jerome portrayed himself as helping to shape the raw zeal for Christian perfection that Athanasius had inspired.¹¹ It must be noted, however, that Jerome's account of Marcella's conversion to the monastic life cannot be reconciled with the known chronology of events, for it is unlikely that Marcella had even been born when Athanasius entered in Rome.¹² The historical license that Jerome took in order to represent himself as an heir to Athanasius simply highlights the enormous influence of the *Life of Antony*. In order to establish himself as an authority on the monastic life, it was necessary for Jerome to place himself within an already established literary tradition and monastic vision.

Since Jerome could not dislodge Antony from the popular imagination, he offered a hero of his own, a hermit named Paul. The *Life of Paul* is framed around an encounter between

Paul and Antony that was the fulfillment of Antony's divine commission to seek one even more holy than himself. In this *Life*, Jerome takes up many of the themes contained in the *Life of Antony*, but he modifies them to suit his own unique vision. At no time does Jerome denigrate Antony. His only direct challenge to Antony is his refutation of the claim that Antony was the first to enter the desert. In the course of the *Life of Paul*, however, Jerome clearly establishes Paul's priority in virtue. Paul has gained a more complete isolation; his abstinence is more rigorous; he is more impoverished; he is acknowledged as superior in virtue by both Antony and God.¹³ During their encounter, Antony begs that he may accompany Paul on his journey to Heaven.¹⁴

For the most part, these differences in virtue are matters of degree rather than substance. What is more significant for discerning Jerome's particular interests is how Paul's vocation deviates from the pattern established by Antony's biographer. In opposition to Antony's famous illiteracy, for example, Jerome represents Paul as being well-educated in both secular and Christian literature.¹⁵ Jerome's depiction of Paul also betrays a fascination with rigorous ascetic practices that transcends what is found in the *Life of Antony*. Like Antony, Paul's ascesis consists of minimal consumption of food, lack of concern for the body, and nearly continuous prayer.¹⁶ Unlike Antony, however, Paul does not rely upon a small garden and instead receives his meager diet of half a loaf a day through divine beneficence.¹⁷ In order to make this paltry fare seem plausible, Jerome offers two examples of even more extreme fasts. One hermit subsists entirely on barley bread and muddy water, while the another consumes only five dried figs a day.¹⁸ Jerome also dwells at length on

the story of a young man who bites off his tongue to prevent his arousal.¹⁹ Jerome's description of Paul's way of life is wanting. While he mentions Paul's practice of continual prayer, he does little more than claim that Paul's body retained the posture of prayer even after his soul had left it.²⁰ While he contrasts Paul's education to Antony's supposed illiteracy, he does not explain what role this education might have played in Paul's monastic life. Ironically, in his desire to emphasize Paul's poverty and isolation, Jerome renders it virtually impossible for Paul to have any access to books.

Unlike the *Life of Antony*, the *Life of Paul* does not contain a sophisticated theology of the monastic life or debates with pagan philosophers. It instead presents Paul's exemplary conduct and other Christian heroes almost entirely in terms of their isolation, extreme fasts, mastery over carnal desire and nearly continuous prayer. This ideal is almost entirely self-interested, being concerned solely with individual salvation and showing little evidence of having a place within the larger Christian community. Paul's isolation would have prevented him from participating in the sacramental life of the Church and the other hermits are described in a similar vein. Nor does Jerome make any provision for cenobitism or other forms of communal activity. Paul's complete isolation denies him even the role of intercessor which Athanasius' *Life* had allowed for Antony. Following Christ demands the severance of all communal and familial bonds. While Jerome's conception of the monastic life will evolve and become richer over the years, the deficiencies of the *Life of Paul* are indicative of much of his early monastic literature.

JEROME'S EARLY MONASTIC VISION

Mark Vessey has recently argued that Jerome used his first set of public letters to create a model of Christian literary activity.²¹ In essence, Jerome portrayed himself as a Latin Origen; a portrayal that would later come back to haunt him. Basing his model on descriptions of classical poets and Eusebius' description of Origen, Jerome created a Christian literary *persona* whose principal attributes were a tireless commitment to reading and writing "in the service of religion," a single-minded engagement with the Bible, and a high level of literary productivity.²² Vessey's argument is sound and provides an insight into both Jerome's literary activity and his understanding of the perfect Christian life. However, it is necessary to add one more attribute to Jerome's cultivated *persona*: a dedicated monastic life.

Jerome put great stock in his experience as a hermit in the Syrian desert, writing that he would gladly have remained there if he had not been driven out by false and unorthodox monks.²³ It was in Syria that he made the acquaintance of monks who claimed to have met the hermit Paul. Jerome's greatest patron while in Syria was Evagrius of Antioch, who produced a polished and widely read translation of the *Life of Antony*.²⁴ Finally, while ostensibly pursuing the life of a solitary, Jerome in fact engaged in extensive literary activity, composing many of his first public letters either from his cell or on his way there. Thus, Jerome did not depend entirely upon forging a link with Athanasius to establish himself as an authority on the monastic life. He claimed that his experience, his travels and his acquaintances had allowed him to tap into the major currents of the monastic tradition. This unique

familiarity with the monastic life gave Jerome the authority to shape its future.

In this early set of letters Jerome describes the monastic life in heroic terms.²⁵ Christian asceticism is little short of mortal (or immortal) combat, in which the lone hero fights against both his own evil inclinations and the demonic enemies of God. Purity comes through physical withdrawal and struggle against the forces of evil. The solitary in the desert gains a communion with God that is possible nowhere else. Jerome praises his friend Rufinus, who went to live among the solitaries of Nitria, as dwelling with a heavenly family on earth.²⁶ He later describes Rufinus as having been washed clean by his experience at Nitria and made as white as snow.²⁷ Jerome's companion Bonosus also abandoned the world and ensconced himself on a small, uninhabited island in the Adriatic. He demonstrated his absolute commitment to God through his abandonment of his social position, his familial obligations and even his dearest friend.²⁸

Jerome wrote twice in praise of Bonosus' vocation. Describing the desolation of Bonosus' isle in vivid detail, Jerome sets it against the heavenly reward which Bonosus will surely receive. He contrasts Bonosus' loneliness to his citizenship in the heavenly city; his isolation to the presence of Christ; his lack of drinking water to the plentiful water of life. "You will be able to praise the victory," Jerome writes, "when you realize the effort of the combatant."²⁹ He likens Bonosus to John the Evangelist on the island of Patmos, suggesting that Bonosus "might see [a vision] in the manner of John."³⁰ Alone on his island but for the presence of Christ, Bonosus "saw the glory of God, which even the apostles did not see except in the desert."³¹

This description is uncompromising. Bonosus' renunciation and isolation are complete; his life is dedicated entirely to a struggle against Satan and to communion with God. His efforts are of heroic proportions and call to mind the deeds of the apostles. Bonosus best fulfills the call to Christian perfection, for it is in the desert that evil can best be fought and there that the glory of God might be seen. Although Jerome writes that he was the first of the two to desire a monastic life, Bonosus was the first to live it.³² What Jerome merely willed, Bonosus carried to completion.³³ Though somewhat overawed by the prospect, Jerome hopes that he, too, might soon embark upon a similar retreat. Jealous of his friend, he chafes at his prolonged stay at Antioch and longs for the opportunity to join the anchorites in the desert of Chalcis. The desert is more beautiful to him than any city and is made into an image of paradise by the saints who dwell there.³⁴ Only poor health prevents his immediate departure.³⁵

Soon after writing these letters, Jerome fulfilled his desire and established himself in a cell at Chalcis. Once there, he strongly urged his friend Heliodorus to abide with him there. Heliodorus had earlier resigned from the army and, upon being baptized, had taken a vow of chastity.³⁶ Heliodorus, however, did not equate chastity with dwelling in the desert and chose instead to remain in his native city of Altinum. He hoped that by remaining in the city, he could fulfill his responsibilities to his family and answer a call to the episcopacy. Jerome angrily disagreed with this choice and strenuously argued that Heliodorus' vow required his complete renunciation of the world.³⁷ He demanded that Heliodorus immediately abandon his family, his responsibilities as a citizen and the potential rewards of becoming a bishop. Jerome went so far as to accuse

Heliodorus of seeking the honor of the episcopacy rather than the duties of pastoral care.³⁸

Jerome argued that Christian perfection demands chastity and mortification, which in turn require complete abandonment of the world. It is not possible to seek perfection and yet remain among people. The duties of a cleric are incompatible with the monastic vocation. Pastoral concern should not prevent Heliodorus from entering the desert. Only after an extended diatribe against remaining in the world does Jerome attempt to mollify his harshness and to entice, rather than to command, Heliodorus to join him. In contrast to his invective on the evils and temptations of the world, Jerome praises the sublime joy of life in the desert and describes the wilderness as rejoicing in the presence of God.³⁹

The uncompromising ideals and naive expectations that Jerome took with him into the desert were not borne out by his own experience. Ill-disposed to solitude, he suffered greatly from what he perceived to be utter isolation. This solitude was very much a matter of perception, for Jerome never truly

renounced the world. Visits from friends were frequent and he deeply regretted their departure.⁴⁰ He maintained an extensive correspondence that was facilitated by a small group of copyists.⁴¹ In a petulant voice Jerome demanded that those who could not visit should write and he reprimanded several who had either not responded with sufficient speed or had not written at sufficient length.⁴²

Regardless of his own failure in the desert, Jerome did not consider that there might be virtually insurmountable difficulties inherent within the eremitic ideal itself. He

continued to idealize the desert and wrote again in praise of Bonosus. Repeating his earlier allusion to John the Evangelist, Jerome described Bonosus as master over his desires.⁴³ Unable to commend his own, less than admirable experience, or the conduct of the Syrian monks whom he had come to despise, Jerome looked instead to the heroic past for exemplars of the Christian life. After leaving Chalcis, Jerome composed, or at least disseminated, his *Life of Paul*.⁴⁴ It is significant that Paul's hermitage was not in Syria but in Thebes. Egypt had now come to embody Jerome's ideal of Christian perfection.

Jerome abandoned Syria and travelled in a roundabout way to Rome. Like the monks of Chalcis, he felt that this community, too, lacked sufficient zeal. Yet, within this community, small groups of women practiced a rigorous asceticism and were dedicated to biblical study. No sooner did Jerome begin to associate with these women than he began to dominate at least some of them. His role was multifold. He directed various women, especially Paula and her daughter Eustochium, in their studies. He advised them concerning their ascetic discipline, encouraging them to pursue their rigorous fasts and extended vigils with all the more determination. He also used his public correspondence with them, which contained both encouragement and reproach, as a means to articulate further his views on the monastic life.

While in Rome Jerome continued to praise the desert.⁴⁵ Writing to Eustochium, he even expressed regret that he had not remained in the Syrian waste; a regret made somewhat hollow by his failure ever again to attempt a similar vocation.⁴⁶ In this same letter, however, Jerome also entertained the possibility of a communal form of

monasticism. When describing the monastic life to Eustochium, he only briefly discussed the eremitic life, mentioning its biblical antecedents and the more recent examples of Paul and Antony. Postponing a more complete discussion to another time, Jerome wrote only that the hermits go out from the monasteries, taking nothing with them into the desert but bread and salt.⁴⁷ A discussion of the communal monasticism practiced in Egypt, as well as sniping at Syrian monks, absorb the remainder of Jerome's attention.

Jerome also eulogized two women while in Rome: Asella and Lea. Inspired by a prophetic dream, Asella's father had consecrated her to virginity as a girl of ten. At twelve, she dedicated herself as a virgin and thenceforth undertook a life of extreme self-denial.⁴⁸ She went out rarely, and then only to visit secretly the shrines of the martyrs.⁴⁹ With a diet consisting of bread, salt, and cold water, she fasted for days at a time. During Lent, she extended these fasts to a week.⁵⁰ Though she had not left Rome, Asella "sought delight in solitude and found in the turbulent city the desert of the monks."⁵¹ Lea, on the other hand, was a Roman widow who had supervised a community of virgins until her death in December of 384.⁵² She had paid little attention to her appearance, eaten only coarse food, and maintained nightly vigils. Through her asceticism, Lea had trampled Satan underfoot and won for herself a crown in Heaven. She had rejected her position as a matron and converted her household into a *monasterium*.⁵³ Her life was proof that one cannot serve two masters. One must choose between Christ and the world.⁵⁴

In these two eulogies and in his *Letter to Eustochium*, Jerome set out the two forms of monastic life he deemed legitimate.

The eremitic was more noted for its rigorous fasts and constant vigils. The communal life had its own perfection, but he also described it as a training ground for future hermits. This hierarchy was echoed in the West in monastic hagiography and other descriptions of monastic life that praised the isolated hero and spoke of his utter abandonment of the world for the sake of Heaven. In the second decade of the fifth century, the Gaul Rusticus believed the surest path toward intimacy with God was the desert and Cassian mentions the prevalence of a similar view even later.⁵⁵ Eucherius, a younger contemporary of Cassian, called the desert the principal dwelling place of God.⁵⁶

JEROME'S INFLUENCE

It would be foolhardy to suggest that Jerome single-handedly inspired a fascination for the eremitic life in the West, or that he alone formulated the widely accepted dichotomy between the eremitic and the communal vocations. While Jerome promulgated this view with exceptional vigor, one cannot discount the impact of the powerful image of Antony emerging from his fort after years of isolation as an initiate into the sacred mysteries.⁵⁷ Augustine recorded how profoundly the hermits of Trier and later the *Life of Antony* had influenced his own conversion.⁵⁸ Sulpicius Severus described the miracles of Martin of Tours in terms that surpassed even the accounts of the Egyptian hermits.⁵⁹ Hilary of Arles wrote of Honoratus who, though no thaumaturge in the Martinian mold, still sought God in the solitude of the desert.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, Jerome played a crucial role in establishing an image of Egyptian monastic life that was quite popular in the West. He had the support of a powerful network of friends in Rome who promulgated his early letters, and the *Life of Paul* enjoyed a wide circulation.⁶¹ When his support in Rome waned, Jerome sought to expand his readership, and therefore his potential patronage, in Gaul.⁶² He recommended the virtue of Proculus, the bishop of Marseille, who would later aid Cassian when he established his monasteries outside Marseille.⁶³ Sulpicius Severus acknowledged Jerome's influence and, more than twenty years later, Cassian would do the same.⁶⁴

There are also glimmers of Jerome's influence in Eucherius' *De laude eremi*. This brief work was written in 429 as a defense of Hilary's return to Lerins from Arles. Hilary had hoped, although in vain, that his flight from Arles would enable him to avoid ordination to the episcopacy.⁶⁵ Eucherius justified Hilary's flight by praising the beauty and sacred character of the desert.⁶⁶ He described the desert as the special residence of God and evinced a long list of biblical examples to prove that God communicates more directly with people in the desert than anywhere else. Eucherius, like Jerome before him, emphasized the importance of physical isolation.⁶⁷ His understanding of solitude was remarkably literal and he described the desert as almost magical. All who dwell in it are somehow inspired to higher and better things.⁶⁸ Even Christ's retreat into the desert is understood entirely in physical terms.⁶⁹ For Eucherius, the desert cell is a "seat of faith, an ark of virtue, a tabernacle of charity, a treasury of piety, a storehouse of justice."⁷⁰ It is the miraculous residence of God.

While Eucherius' portrayal bears a striking similarity to Jerome's early writings, such imagery was not uncommon in Gaul at that time and a direct reliance is difficult to prove. However, Bartelink has demonstrated that there is at least one direct parallel between Jerome and Eucherius. A theme running throughout Eucherius' work is the contrast between the fertility of productive fields and the apparent barrenness of the desert.⁷¹ Despite, or perhaps because of, its desolation, the desert is the more productive in virtue. Eucherius even claimed that God deliberately created barren wastes in order to provide a future home for hermits.⁷² This contrast recalls the imagery that Jerome used in his letter to Heliodorus, which praises the desert as *florihus vemans*.⁷³ Bartelink has

shown that Eucherius is the first writer after Jerome to have used this phrase.⁷⁴

Jerome's early works and Eucherius' *De laude eremi* indicate some important aspects of how the monastic life was understood in Gaul in the beginning of the fifth century. Many believed that there were only two legitimate forms of monastic life. While each of these had its own perfection, a life of solitude was the more virtuous. There also existed a remarkable naivete, or even ignorance, about the nature and goals of monastic practices. While the solitary life was often praised, writers offered little indication of how such a life was to be pursued. Jerome, for instance, praised Paul's continual prayer, but seemed unable to explain how such prayer might be achieved. Similarly, in his early letters Jerome rarely addressed the need for instruction. He instead described the eremitic life as though it required only tremendous determination and an indefatigable spirit.⁷⁵ Rather than an almost insurmountable hardship, the rigors of utter solitude came to be described as a rich source of personal blessings and miraculous power.

Jerome's views were not received without criticism. Doubt was raised about the historical veracity of the *Life of Paul*.⁷⁶ Jerome's excessive praise of virginity and his denigration of sexual union within marriage prompted his friends to suppress his *Contra Iovinianum*.⁷⁷ In his letter to the adolescent Eustochium, Jerome employed language from the Song of Songs to describe longing for God in a way that disquieted some readers by blurring the distinction between carnal and spiritual desire.⁷⁸ Finally, as was shown in the previous chapter, Jerome's division of the monastic life into two

mutually distinct and easily identifiable vocations was not an accurate portrayal of events in Egypt.

Nevertheless, Jerome was one of the foremost Latin monastic writers of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Although several forms of monastic life had arisen locally in the West, many Christians still looked to the East for their inspiration and Jerome's accounts were warmly received.⁷⁹ Those who could claim knowledge of the East possessed a unique authority to teach and Jerome's experience as a hermit, no matter how short-lived and unsuccessful, elevated his reputation even further. Jerome helped to shape western perceptions of eastern monasticism and, as a result, to shape western monastic life itself. Jerome's authority also allowed him to muffle another source of knowledge of the East: Rufinus of Aquileia.

APATHEIA AND INPECCANTIA

The Ghost of Origen

Friends from boyhood, Jerome and Rufinus surrendered their worldly aspirations and chose to live in a loosely arranged Christian community at Aquileia. When this community disintegrated a short time later, each went his separate way.⁸⁰ While in Antioch awaiting his own sojourn in the desert, Jerome learned that Rufinus was dwelling among the monks of Nitria, whom Jerome characterized as a heavenly family on earth.⁸¹ A short time later, he echoed Psalm 51 when he described Rufinus as washed clean by his experience in Egypt and made as white as snow.⁸² Jerome's admiration for Egyptian monastic life was only to rise in the next few years as he became disenchanted with his own experience in Syria.

Later in their lives there seemed every possibility for Jerome and Rufinus to revive their friendship. When Jerome arrived in Bethlehem to establish a monastic community, he found Rufinus only a few miles away in Jerusalem. However, controversy over Origen's theology was to drive the friends apart forever. Jerome had incautiously relied on Origen in his earlier biblical commentaries and, in his later years, was desperate to demonstrate he was and always had been free of the taint of heresy. He vociferously condemned not only Origen but all who were sympathetic to the long dead theologian. This blanket condemnation included his old friend Rufinus, who responded to Jerome's attacks by defending Origen and by reminding all who would listen that Jerome had once embraced Origen enthusiastically. Never one to back away from a quarrel, Jerome unleashed a stream of

invective against Rufinus that would continue long after the latter had died.

The long and tortured history of this controversy, or series of controversies, has been traced before and its intricacies need not be recounted here.⁸³ However, two aspects of this controversy are important for the interpretation of Cassian. The first is that the struggle over Origen's more questionable theological claims drew in many people and its impact can be detected in Latin monastic literature. Sulpicius Severus, for example, described Martin of Tours, in his *Life of Martin*, as accepting the possibility that Satan may one day be restored to heaven, a proposition attributed to Origen that would later be condemned.⁸⁴ Only a few years later, however, Sulpicius included in his *Dialogues* a very clear denial that Martin could ever have supported such a notion, a clear sign that even western Gaul was not immune to the struggle over Origen's theology.⁸⁵

The second and more important aspect of the Origenist controversy is that it was unexpectedly revived late in the career of both Cassian and Jerome. Each man had thought the debate behind them. Cassian had left Egypt when disagreement and then violence erupted over Origen's understanding of prayer. Jerome had outlived Rufinus, who even before his death had refused to participate further in the conflict. The arrival of Pelagius in Palestine, however, was to have significant consequences for both Cassian and Jerome. In the course of his debate with Pelagius, Jerome would attack the monks of Nitria and Kellia. No longer a heavenly family on earth whose practices could render one as white as snow, the monks had fallen into heresy by teaching that humans might become perfect. In the end, Jerome's limited

theological understanding would combine with his heavy-handed style of polemic to limit severely Cassian's ability to communicate the foundation of Graeco-Coptic monasticism to the West.

Pelagius and Origen

In the last decade of Jerome's life, Pelagius came to reside in Palestine. He was tolerated, if not welcomed, by John, the patriarch of Jerusalem. This angered Jerome, who held no love for John because of his earlier support of Rufinus. Tension soon began to grow between the supporters of Pelagius and of Jerome. Ctesiphon, presumably one of Pelagius' patrons, wrote to Jerome in the hope of establishing a dialogue between the two sides. Jerome had no desire to participate in such a dialogue and instead responded harshly to Ctesiphon. Among the charges that Jerome leveled against Pelagius was that of being an Origenist.⁸⁶

According to Jerome, it was Pelagius who first raised the specter of Origen by reviving Rufinus' accusation that Jerome had relied heavily on Origen in his early biblical commentaries, especially his *Commentary on Ephesians*.⁸⁷ While Jerome argued vehemently that he had vindicated himself of the charge of heresy long before and that his ferocious attacks on the supporters of Origen were proof of his orthodoxy, he nonetheless felt vulnerable to this sort of accusation. There is good reason to accept Jerome's claim that Pelagius was the first to raise the ghost of Origen. As Robert Evans has shown, it would not have been to Jerome's benefit to mention Origen. He had indeed relied heavily on Origen in his early biblical commentaries and his subsequent recantations and

denials could not entirely hide this fact. Pelagius, on the other hand, could have hoped to weaken Jerome's support in the West by reminding Latin readers of his earlier errors and the bitter nature of his earlier conflicts.⁸⁸ Since Jerome enjoyed little popularity in Palestine, he was heavily dependent upon support from the West to sustain the monasteries that he and Paula had founded.⁸⁹

Jerome's reversal of Pelagius' accusation may also have been more than an attempt to turn the tables on his foe. He may have seen the affinity between the supporters of Pelagius and the earlier supporters of Rufinus and Melania the Elder. As his stance against Pelagius developed in the course of his writings, Jerome became increasingly convinced that Pelagius had gained his understanding of sin from Origen, or at least from Origen's intellectual descendants. Basing his study on the efforts of A. J. Smith and Torgny Bohlin, Evans has noted that Pelagius was very much indebted to Rufinus' translation of Origen's commentaries on Paul.⁹⁰ Evans and later Clark have argued that Jerome perceived the root of Pelagius' doctrine to be an understanding of the origin and nature of the soul more at home with Origen's thought than with Augustine's.⁹¹ If Jerome could prove the existence of a link between Origen and Pelagius, then his battle would be over before it had begun.

The First Salvo

In his reply to Ctesiphon, Jerome follows a well-rehearsed pattern. Rather than limiting himself to the theological issues at hand, he begins by expressing scorn for Pelagius' associates, both intellectual and personal, real and imagined. In what may seem a bizarre twist, this scorn encompasses

Pelagius' apparent dependence upon wealthy female patrons.⁹² Jerome then challenges two supposed propositions of Pelagius that he believes are antithetical to the Christian faith: that humans can be without sin and that their sinlessness makes them like God. Jerome once again personalizes his attack by challenging what he perceives to be the intellectual tradition of the doctrine of sinlessness.

Jerome's assault on those whom he believed to be Pelagius' intellectual forebears is of tremendous significance to the understanding of *apatheia* by Western Christians. According to Jerome, the concept originated with Pythagoras and Zeno, who compressed all heresy into a few words by claiming that humans might become equal to God. These ancient philosophers taught that the passions (*ipathe*) can be purged from the mind through meditation on and the diligent practice of virtue. When one has complete freedom from the passions, then one has achieved equality with God.⁹³ Jerome calls upon Greek philosophy itself to refute this doctrine. Through the mouths of both the Peripatetics and the Academicians, he argues that such a purgation of the passions is impossible, for humans are constituted of a body as well as a soul. This view, moreover, is confirmed by the apostle Paul.⁹⁴ Jerome's brief synopsis of how Aristotle and Plato described human emotions leaves much to be desired. His description of *apatheia* is little more than a caricature, and his supposed reliance on the ancient philosophers shows that Jerome had little understanding of their views.⁹⁵ This casual treatment of Greek philosophy will lead Jerome to contradict himself in his later anti-Pelagian writings, and even to undermine his own position vis-à-vis *apatheia*.⁹⁶

Having demonstrated, at least to his own satisfaction, that such an eradication of emotions is philosophically unsound, Jerome continues his attempt to trace the genealogy of *inpeccantia* (sinlessness) by listing others whom he thinks held a similar view. The first three, Mani, Priscillian and Basilides, receive only brief mention. According to Jerome, they have in common that each taught the possibility of human perfection by one means or another.⁹⁷ The next two in the list, however, deserve careful attention, for they are older contemporaries of Pelagius and intellectually related to one another.

The first of these is Evagrius Ponticus. Again, Jerome's first method of attack is to imply guilt through association. Evagrius corresponded regularly with Melania the Elder, "whose name attests to the darkness of her perfidy."⁹⁸ This correspondence alone is enough to show his guilt as a heretic. More importantly, Evagrius wrote tracts on *apatheia*. By implication, he therefore shared with Pythagoras and Zeno the heretical notion of human divinization. Evagrius used the same terms as the ancient philosophers and spoke of the possibility of impassibility.⁹⁹ Such a condition, Jerome scoffs, would mean that one is either a rock, thereby denying one's humanity, or a god, thereby equating one with God.¹⁰⁰

The next "heretic" on the list is Rufinus of Aquileia, whom Jerome significantly introduces as a disciple of Evagrius.¹⁰¹ It was Rufinus' translation of Evagrius into Latin that allowed this dangerous doctrine to permeate the West, and Rufinus provided evidence of his own heretical leanings by praising Origenist monks in his history of the monks.¹⁰² Moreover, Rufinus was linked with the "Pythagoreans" through his translation of the *Sententiae* of Sextus.¹⁰³ Only rashness or

insanity led Rufinus to suggest that Sextus had been pope Sixtus I. On no apparent evidence of his own, Jerome instead claims that the author was an otherwise unknown Pythagorean philosopher. Of particular concern to Jerome is that the *Sententiae* contain the Pythagorean doctrine that humans can be of the same substance as God, thus referring back to the “vel deus” condemnation of Evagrius and the Stoics. Finally, Jerome resurrects the old Origenist debate by castigating Rufinus for commending Origen to the West through his translations of the *Deprincipiis* and the first book of the *Apologia* of Eusebius Pamphilus.¹⁰⁴ Jerome’s reply to Ctesiphon therefore forges three very important links. It establishes *apatheia* as part of a long tradition of heretical thought, it links Evagrius to the doctrine of *apatheia*, and it describes Rufinus as a disciple of Evagrius.

Apatheia and Inpeccantia

Jerome continued his attack against Pelagius in his *Commentary on Jeremiah*.¹⁰⁵ He had postponed books four and five of this commentary in order to respond to Ctesiphon. In his prologue to book four, Jerome slightly alters the genealogy of *apatheia* he presented in his letter. He retains Pythagoras and Zeno as its originators, but now adds Origen as one of the continuators of the doctrine. Rufinus (childishly called the grunter) and Evagrius are now named as Origen’s disciples. Jerome thereby directly attributes the doctrine of *apatheia* to Origen as well as to Evagrius and Rufinus.

Jerome had already alluded to a connection between *anamartesia* and *apatheia* in his letter to Ctesiphon.¹⁰⁶ Now, however, he places Pelagius in a direct line of thinkers whom he held to be heretics because of their belief in the possibility

of sinlessness. Jerome also associates *inpeccantia* with *apatheia*, a doctrine which he had already proven to be invalid according to both Greek philosophy and Christian orthodoxy. Finally he introduces a new line of attack by linking *inpeccantia* with his old opponent Jovinian, who had proposed that any who have undergone baptism in full faith cannot be overthrown by the devil.¹⁰⁷

There are therefore three separate attacks being made in the passage. The first is to attempt once again to discredit *apatheia* through the tradition out of which it arose. The second is to associate *apatheia* as much as possible with Origen and his disciples, so as to discredit both the term and its promulgators indirectly. The third is to conflate the term with Jovinian's understanding of post-baptismal grace and Pelagius' understanding of *inpeccantia*. Later in the same commentary, Jerome will again attack *apatheia*, this time associating it with Rufinus and his translation of Sextus. More importantly, in this attack *apatheia* and *inpeccantia* are no longer merely linked. They are equated.¹⁰⁸

Jerome again took up the attack in his *Dialogus aduersus Pelagianos*. In the prologue he recommends his letter to Ctesiphon, where he has already refuted the subtleties of the teachers of *apatheia*.¹⁰⁹ He then modifies his previous description of the term and claims that there are two schools of thought concerning *pathe* or *perturbationes*. Some argue that these emotions can be eradicated from the mind; others only that their power can be broken, ruled or moderated.¹¹⁰ Jerome has also shifted ground with regard to his earlier claim concerning Greek philosophy. He now asserts that the Stoics, the Peripatetics and the Academicians all hold to one of these two positions. He does not seem to be aware that this new

position undermines his previous argument that even the Peripatetics and Academicians find the concept of *apatheia* philosophically implausible.

Jerome also revised the intellectual lineage of *inpeccantia*. While he remains constant in his claim that Origen was responsible for introducing *apatheia* into Christian thought, he affords Evagrius only a brief mention. While Mani, Priscillian and Jovinian remained, Basilides is removed in favor of the Messalians.¹¹¹ Again, Jerome writes that these “heretics” shared a belief in the possibility of human perfection. Moreover, Jerome reiterates that this perfection means not simply a likeness to but an equality with God.¹¹² The perfect are not even capable of sins of thought or ignorance.

While Pelagius did not respond to these attacks directly, he did discuss the movements of the soul and how to control them. To Demetriada he wrote that one must keep constant watch over each thought and discern its origins immediately, so that the good can be nourished and the evil washed away. Moreover, Pelagius argued that there are three kinds of thoughts: those which the will enhances affectionately, *typoi* which flit through the mind, and those which prompt an unwilling mind. He urged Demetriada to meditate on scripture constantly in order to prevent evil thoughts from arising.¹¹³ This is intriguing in two ways. First, Pelagius’ understanding of the different kind of thoughts resembles Evagrius’ own. Second, Pelagius emphasized scriptural study as a way to still the mind. Cassian would recommend a similar practice nearly a decade later.

Students of *apatheia* on the one hand and of Pelagius on the other are well-advised not to base their views solely on Jerome's writings. His grasp of theological subtleties was limited and he provides little information about the spread of Pelagianism in the West. His equation of *apatheia* with *inpeccantia* was not accurate and he sheds little light either on Pelagius or on the concept of *apatheia*. Nevertheless, Jerome was widely read by an audience largely unfamiliar with Origen, Evagrius and *apatheia*. His opposition to "Origenism" and his equation of *apatheia* with *inpeccantia* would have a significant impact. Augustine himself consulted Jerome about Origen's teachings. Pope Anastasius demonstrated the taint of the very name of Origen when he condemned all of Origen's works without discrimination.

The debate between Jerome and Pelagius placed Evagrius within the Origenist tradition on a level other than that of his cosmological speculation in the *Kephalaia gnostica*. Jerome attempted to identify Evagrius and Rufinus not only through their support of Origen's writings, but also through their doctrine of *apatheia*. Evagrius' teachings would therefore have encountered two potential sources of hostility: those who supported the earlier anti-Origenist campaign and those who opposed Pelagius' supporters. These two sources of opposition were not mutually exclusive. Finally, if Griffie's thesis is to be accepted and Cassian was in Palestine at the same time as Pelagius, and perhaps even at the Council of Diospolis, Jerome's assaults would have made a considerable impact. Cassian's reluctance to use the term *apatheia* may have been linked more closely to the anti-Pelagian campaign in the West than to the anti-Origenist fervor that had peaked almost two decades earlier.

NOTES

1. Markus, *End*, 90-92.
2. Cassian himself took up this theme. *Con.* 18.5.1-4. For an analysis of Cassian's accounts of the origins of Christian monasticism, de Vogüé, "Monachisme et eglise," 213-240.
3. The wide variety of practices in the West and their apparent lack of immediate eastern predecessors goes far toward eroding the general view of Egyptian origins for western monasticism. Lorenz, "Anfänge." Nevertheless, many Latin writers attempted to make such a connection.
4. Goehring, "Encroaching," 282. I do not deny that Antony and others actually withdrew from society into the desert. I merely follow Goehring's argument that the literary portrayal of this withdrawal exaggerated the role of physical separation. I will suggest below that some writers misunderstood the metaphorical character of this portrayal, and that this had a significant impact on how the West viewed the ascetic life.
5. Athanasius, *Vita s. Antonii* 6.
6. Athanasius, *Vita s. Antonii* 8-10.
7. Athanasius, *Vita s. Antonii* 14.
8. The western reception of the *Life of Antony*, rather than its authorship, is of importance here. For a recent exchange in the rather protracted debate over the *Life's* authorship, Barnes, "Angel of Light," 353-368 and Louth, "St. Athanasius," 504-509.

9. Barnes, *Athanasius*, xi, 50, 67.
10. Jerome, *Ep.* 127.5.
11. Jerome, *Ep.* 127.3.
12. Barnes, *Athanasius*, 254, n.24. Pace Lorenz, “Anfänge,” 4-5.
13. Fuhrmann, “Mönchsgeschichten,” 69-82; de Vogüé, *Monachisme*, 150-184.
14. Jerome, *Vita s. Pauli* 12.
15. Jerome, *Vita s. Pauli* 4. Leclerc, “Antoine,” 764, discusses Jerome’s depiction of Paul as a literate Roman.
16. Jerome, *Vita s. Pauli* 6, 10, 17.
17. Athanasius, *Vita s. Antonii* 50. A raven delivered bread to him in the manner of Elijah. Jerome, *Vita s. Pauli* 10.
18. Jerome, *Vita s. Pauli* 6.
19. Jerome, *Vita s. Pauli* 3.
20. Jerome, *Vita s. Pauli* 15.
21. Vessey, “Jerome’s Origen,” 135-145.
22. Vessey, “Jerome’s Origen,” 141-143.
23. Jerome, *Ep.* 7.2, 15, 17.

24. Evagrius' joint role as patron and translator has led de Vogüe, *Monachisme*, 85-87, to describe him as the central figure in the literary history of monasticism.

25. The following survey of Jerome's early views draws heavily from my "Development."

26. Jerome, *Ep.* 3.1.

27.

Jerome, *Ep.* 4.2.

28. Jerome, *Ep.* 3.4.

29. "tunc poteris laudare uictoriam, cum laborem proeliantis agnoueris." Jerome, *Ep.* 3.4. For the literary antecedents of these contrasts, de Vogue, *Monachisme*, 91-106.

30. "fortasse ad exemplum Iohannis aliquid uidet." Jerome, *Ep.* 3.4.

31. "uidet gloriam dei, quam etiam apostoli nisi in deserto non uiderant." Jerome, *Ep.* 3.4.

32. Jerome, *Ep.* 3.5.

33. Jerome, *Ep.* 3.5.

34. Jerome, *Ep.* 2.

35. Jerome *Epp.* 2; 3.2; 4.2; 7.3. Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 101, does not accept Jerome's excuse of ill health, instead attributing his hesitation to "a surprising degree of

indecision.” What is important here is that while the task may have been daunting, Jerome’s idealization of it cannot be questioned.

36. Jerome, *Ep.* 14.6.

37. Jerome, *Ep.* 14.3-4,9; de Vogue, *Monachisme*, 118.

38. Jerome, *Ep.* 14.3-4,9; de Vogue, *Monachisme*, 118.

39. Jerome, *Ep.* 14.10.

40. Jerome, *Ep.* 7.1.

41. Jerome, *Ep.* 5.2.

42. Jerome, *Epp.* 8, 9.

43. Jerome, *Ep.* 7.3.

44. Following Ferdinand Cavallera, J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome*, 60, argues that the *Life* was composed soon after Jerome had returned to Antioch. Kozik, “Introduction,” 10, claims on the basis of a variant reading that it was written in Chalcis. De Vogue, *Monachisme*, 153, argues for the beginning of Jerome’s sojourn at Chalcis. Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 106, suggests that it was either written or revised while in Antioch. What is significant is that Jerome allowed the dissemination of the work after he had abandoned the desert.

45. Jerome, *Ep. ad Praesidium* 4; de Vogue, *Monachisme*, 216-220.

46. Jerome, *Ep.* 22.7.
47. Jerome, *Ep.* 22.36. Although brief, this description is noteworthy, for it is one of the earliest historical claims of an evolution from the cenobitic to the eremitic life.
48. Jerome, *Ep.* 24.2-3.
49. Jerome, *Ep.* 24.4.
50. “ieiunium pro ludo habuit, inediam refectionem.” Jerome, *Ep.* 24.3.
51. “solitudinem putaret esse delicias et in urbe turbida inueniret heremum monachorum.” Jerome, *Ep.* 24.4.
52. Jerome, *Ep.* 23.3. Her death coincided with that of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus. *PLRE* 1:722-24.
53. Jerome, *Ep.* 23.2.
54. Jerome, *Ep.* 23.4.
55. Jerome, *Ep.* 125. Cassian, *Con.* 1-10, *praef.* 3.
56. Eucherius, *De laude* 3-4.
57. Athanasius, *Vita s. Antonii* 14.
58. Augustine, *Confessiones* 8.6; also his description of Christian monks, *De moribus* 31.
- 59.

Sulpicius, *Dialogorum* 1.24-25.

60. Hilarius, *Vita s. Honorati* 10.3, 20.2. This *Life* is noteworthy for the absence of miracles. Harper, “Jolm Cassian,” 371-380, argues that this can be attributed to Cassian’s influence.

61. For an analysis of this network, Clark, *Origenist*, 11-42.

62. Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 118-122.

63. Jerome, *Ep.* 125.20. Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 122. For Proculus and Cassian, Griffe, “Cassien,” 240-244.

64. Sulpicius, *Dialogorum* 1.8-9; Cassian, *Inst, praef* 5-7.

65. For the date, O. Chadwick, “Euladius,” 205.

66. Desert is understood somewhat loosely, for by this time Lerins had been occupied for more than two decades.

67. Markus, *End*, 161.

68. Eucherius, *De laude* 35.

69. Eucherius, *De laude* 25-26.

70. “Hoc igitur heremi habitaculum dicam non inmerito quandam fidei sedem, uirtutis arcam, caritatis sacrarium, pietatis thesaurum, iustitiae promptuarium.” Eucherius, *De laude* 28.

71. Eucherius, *De laude* 40.

72. Eucherius, *De laude* 5.

73. Jerome, *Ep.* 14.10.

74. Eucherius, *De laude* 40; Bartelink, “Oxymores,” 13-15.

75. Later in his life Jerome would be much more cautious and stress both the need for guidance and the dangers of prolonged isolation. E.g., *Ep.* 125.9,15-16; 130.11,17. Also, Driver, “Development,” 47-50.

76. Jerome, *Vitas. Hilarionis* 1.

77. J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome*, 188, n. 49, *Ep.* 48.2 (*re vera* 49.2).

78. Jerome told Eustochium, a budding adolescent, to lie in bed at night and await the coming of the bridegroom. Jerome’s language leaves the reader uncertain whether Eustochium’s quickening desire can be understood in purely spiritual terms. See Cox Miller, “Blazing Body,” 21-45.

79. “What must be stressed is that both the need for models, and the literature in which the models were displayed, were features of the ascetic life proper to the West.” Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 94.

80. Jerome, *Ep.* 3.3, mentions the sudden whirlwind which shattered this community. In his translation of Eusebius’ *Chronicle*, he describes the community as “Aquileienses clerici quasi chorus beatorum habentur.” *Chronicon* 329.

81. Jerome, *Ep.* 3.1.

82. Jerome, *Ep.* 4.2.

83. The most recent study is by Clark, *Origenist*, who argues that the former friends' participation in the Origenist controversy had as much to do with a struggle for authority as with theology.

84. Sulpicius, *Vita s. Martini* 22.

85. Sulpicius, *Dialogorum* 1.6-7. Van Andel, "Sulpicius," 278-287.

86.

The following discussion relies on my "Palestinian Ignorance." In the same year, Elm published "Genealogies," which examines genealogies of heresy (including Jerome's) as rhetorical constructions.

87. Jerome, *In Hieremiam, prol.* 3; also 4.41. For Rufinus' earlier attack, *Apologia* 1.23-44.

88. Evans, *Pelagius*, 7-9.

89. Palladius, *Historica Lausiaca* 36,41.

90. Evans, *Pelagius*, 18-20.

91. Evans, *Pelagius*, 7, argues that Jerome has been largely ignored by students of the Pelagian debate because of his different approach to the problem. See also Clark, *Origenist*, 221-222.

92. Jerome, *Ep.* 133.1-3.

93. “quae enim potest alia maior esse temeritas quam dei sibi non dicam similitudinem sed aequalitatem uindicare et breui sententia omnium hereticorum uenena conplecti, quae de philosophorum et maxime Pythagorae et Zenonis, principis Stoicorum, fonte manarunt? illi enim, quae Graeci appellant *pathe*, nos perturbationes possumus dicere, aegritudinem uidelicet et gaudium, spem et metum, quorum duo praesentia, duo futura sunt, adserunt extirpari posse de mentibus et nullam fibram radicemque uitiorum in homine omnino residere meditatione et adsidua exercitatione uirtutum.” Jerome, *Ep.* 133.1.

94. “aduersum quos et Peripatetici, qui de Aristotelis fonte descendunt, fortissime disputant et Academici noui, quos Tullius sequitur, et eorum non dico res—quae nullae sunt—sed umbras et uota subuertunt. hoc est enim hominem ex homine tollere et in corpore constitutum esse sine corpore et optare potius quam docere dicente apostolo: miser ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius?” Jerome, *Ep.* 133.1.

95. Regarding Stoicism, for example, Colish, *Stoic*, vol. 2, 90, concludes that “there are, then, a few areas in which Jerome reflects an integral grasp of Stoic ethics and where he coordinates it appositely with Christian problems and concerns. On balance, however, the Stoic gleanings from his works are few, his uses of them are tendentious and superficial, and he is not interested in their implications or interconnections.”

96. For a detailed discussion of the use of *apatheia* in classical philosophy and early Christian literature, Frohnhofen, *Apathiea*, and Joest, “Die Bedeutung,” 7-53.

97. Jerome, *Ep.* 133.3.

98. “Euagrius Ponticus Hiborita, qui scribit ad uirgines, scribit ad monachos, scribit ad eam, cuius nomen nigredinis testatur perfidiae tenebras, edidit librum et sententias *peri apatheias*, quam nos ‘inpassibilitatem’ uel ‘inperturbationem’ possumus dicere, quando numquam animus ulla cogitatione et uitio commouetur et—ut simpliciter dicam—uel saxum uel deus est.” Jerome, *Ep.* 133.3.

99. Jerome preferred *perturbatio* to *passio*. E.g., “quas nos perturbationes interpretati sumus, graeci *pathe* appellant, quae si *kakozelos* in passiones uertamus, uerbum magis quam sensum uerbi expresserimus.” Jerome, *In Ioelem* 4, 11. 175-177.

100. That in his early years Jerome wrote more favorably of a mind undisturbed by passions, Colish, *Stoic*, 2:77.

101.

“huius [Evagrii] libros per orientem Graecos et interpretante discipulo eius Rufino Latinos plerique in occidente lectitant.” Jerome, *Ep.* 133.3.

102. Jerome, *Ep.* 133.3.

103. “illam autem temeritatem, immo insaniam eius, quis possit digno explicare sermone, quod librum Sexti Pythagorei, hominis absque Christo atque ethnici, inmutato nomine Xysti, martyris et Romanae ecclesiae episcopi, praenotauit? in quo iuxta dogma Pythagoricum, qui hominem exaequant deo et de eius dicunt esse substantia, multa de perfectione dicuntur, ut, qui uolumen philosophi nesciunt, sub

martyris nomine bibant de aureo calice Babylonis.” Jerome, *Ep.* 133.3.

104. Jerome, *Ep.* 133.3.

105. “multis et de toto hue orbe confluentium turbis et sanctorum fratrum monasteri-ique curis occupatus commentarios in Hieremiam per interualla dictabam, ut, quod deerat otio, superesset industriae, cum subito heresis Pythagorae et Zenonis *apatheias* et *anamartesias*, id est ‘inpassibilitatis’ et ‘inpeccantiae,’ quae olim in Origene et dudum in discipulis eius Grunnio Euagrioque Pontico et Iouiniano iugulata est, coepit reuiuescere et non solum in occidente, sed et in orientis partibus sibilare et in quibusdam insulis, praecipueque Siciliae et Rhodi, maculare plerosque et crescere per dies singulos, dum secreto docent et publice negant.” Jerome, *In Hieremiam* 4.1.

106. Jerome, *Ep.* 133.3.

107. Jerome first described Jovinian’s position in the following way: “nititur approbare eos, qui plena fide in baptisate renati sunt, a diabolo non posse subverti.” *Aduersus Iouinianum* 1.3. Later in the same treatise, Jerome attempted to build a straw man by changing the action from overthrow to tempt. “Secunda propositio est, eos qui fuerint baptizati, a diabolo non posse tentari.” Jerome, *Aduersus Iouinianum* 2.1.

108. “miserabilis Grunnius, qui ad calumniandos sanctos uiros aperuit os suum linguamque suam docuit mendacium, Sexti Pythagorei, hominis gentilissimi, unum librum interpretatus est in Latinum diuisitque eum in duo uolumina

et sub nomine sancti martyris Xysti, Romanae urbis episcopi, ausus est edere, in quibus nulla christi, nulla spiritus sancti, nulla dei patris, nulla patriarcharum et prophetarum et apostolorum fit mentio, et hunc librum solita temeritate et insania ‘Anulum’ nominauit, qui per multas prouincias legitur, et maxime ab his, qui *apatheian* et inpeccantiam praedicant.” Jerome, *In Hieremiam* 4.41.

109. Jerome, *Dialogus aduersus Pelagianos*, prol. 1.

110. “Nulli enim dubium, quin Stoicorum et Peripateticorum, hoc est ueteris Academiae, ista contentio sit, quod alii eorum asserunt *pathe*, quas nos perturbationes possumus dicere, aegritudinem, gaudium, spem, timorem, eradicari et exstirpari posse de mentibus hominum, alii frangi, regi atque moderari, et quasi infrenes equos quibusdam lupatis coerceri.” Jerome, *Dialogus aduersus Pelagianos*, prol. 1.

111. Jerome, *Dialogus aduersus Pelagianos*, prol. 1.

112. “quorum omnium [hereticorum] ista sententia est, posse ad perfectionem, et non dicam similitudinem, sed aequalitatem Dei humanam uirtutem et scientiam peruenire, ita ut se asserant ne in cogitatione quidem et ignorantia, cum ad consummationis culmen ascenderint, posse peccare.” Jerome, *Dialogus aduersus Pelagianos*, prol. 1.

113. Pelagius, *Epistula ad Demetriadem* 26-27. Evans, *Pelagius*, 23-24, argues that these discussions were inspired by Jerome’s attacks. He claims that Pelagius vindicated himself from the charge of *apatheia* by arguing that, while sin does arise from *cogitatio*, there is no sin attached to those

thoughts which merely flit across the mind or are conquered by the will. Only the improper thought to which the mind gives consent is sinful. J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome*, 215, n.35, follows Evans in this. However, while *inpeccantia* and *apatheia* are not identical, they cannot be differentiated so easily on these grounds. Evagrius, too, allows for the possibility of random thoughts passing through the mind and speaks of them as sinful only if the mind dwells upon them. Evagrius, *Pradius, praef.* 8.

CHAPTER 4

Literary Structure and Monastic *Praxis*

APPROPRIATING THE SELF IN THE TEXT

And pouring forth tears we begged that same *abba* for a word of instruction, because we knew most clearly this inflexibility of his mind, that he would never consent to open the gate of perfection except to those desiring it faithfully and seeking it with every contrition of heart, for fear that if he should hold it forth randomly either to those not wishing it or to those thirsting for it in a lukewarm manner, and opening to the unworthy and to those receiving scornfully what ought to be learned only by those hoping for perfection, he would appear to commit either the vice of bragging or the crime of treachery. At last, worn down by our prayers, he began.¹

At the beginning of his *Conferences* Cassian described a scene that was typical of the instruction he had received while in Egypt. A young monk would seek out an *abba* in the hope of receiving *logoi*, or words of advice about how he might attain the kingdom of God. After evaluating the sincerity of the younger monk's desire and discerning his particular needs, the *abba* would reply, often briefly but sometimes at great length.² This ritual, recorded often in the *Apophthegmata* and other monastic literature, lay at the heart of the relationship between master and student.³ Each monk engaged in the dialogue with definite expectations about what was to occur, and each was mindful of the role he was expected to play. The younger monk owed his *abba* complete trust and obedience, believing his elder to be a better judge of the origin and nature of his thoughts than himself.⁴ If the disciple were to ignore his *abba's* advice, then the teaching relationship would collapse and the *abba's* grace of teaching itself would be jeopardized.⁵ The *abba*, on the other hand,

was expected to provide not only discernment and sage advice, but also a living example of what he taught.⁶ If the *abba* should fail to discern properly the needs of his student, then he would endanger his disciple by offering sacred mysteries to one who was not yet ready to receive them. If the *abba* should fail

to exemplify the content of his teaching, then his words would possess no authority. For this ritual of instruction to be effective, it was necessary for each participant to fulfill his role.

Ironically, the very commission to record the institutes of the Egyptians for a Gallic audience prevented Cassian from offering instruction in the intimate setting he so eloquently described. A written text would mediate the close relationship between master and disciple that was crucial to monastic instruction. Reading would replace an experience founded upon supervision, discernment, and the practical application of what has been taught. Cassian could not discern the needs of his individual readers; nor could there be any certainty that his *logoi* would fulfill a particular reader's needs. The reader would be left to his own devices, seeking from a written text the remedy for a self-diagnosed disease.

Despite these tremendous obstacles, Cassian did not entirely abandon the model of instruction he had encountered as a youth. He instead attempted to recreate the interaction between master and disciple as an act of reading. To accomplish this, Cassian structured the bulk of his monastic teaching in the form of dialogues between Germanus (Cassian's erstwhile companion) on the one hand and the Egyptian *abbas* on the other. He hoped by means of these dialogues "to place before [the reader] the men themselves

embodied, in a fashion, in their own institutes, and what is more, speaking in Latin.”⁷ Cassian intended the *Conferences* to be more than living descriptions of the *abbas* and his reader was to be more than a mute witness to the dialogues. Instead, the *Conferences* establish the setting in which the interaction between reader and text is to occur. Rather than merely apprehending their words, the reader is to converse with the *abbas*, sometimes challenging them, other times asking for more. Imagining the very *abbas* themselves before them, living the very life they described, Cassian’s readers are to “receiv[e] into their cells the authors of the *Conferences* themselves along with the very volumes of the *Conferences* and, in a fashion, [speak] with them through daily questions and answers.”⁸ By participating directly in the dialogues, the reader will interact with the *abbas* in a manner reminiscent of the ritual Cassian described at the very beginning of his first *Conference*.

In order to participate, or play a role, in these dialogues, the reader must temporarily suspend his own self-awareness and to imagine himself as one of the interlocutors of the text.⁹ In essence, the reader must adopt Germanus’ voice as his own. To encourage this, Cassian frequently uses the first person plural to invoke the empathy of his reader. While the “we” of the text often refers to Germanus and the young Cassian, it also incorporates the reader. When using the metaphor of a money-changer to describe the discernment of spirits, for example, Cassian laments the counterfeit spirits that may drive “us” from the cloister.¹⁰ In a later *Conference* Cassian describes Germanus, like the reader, as having renounced his possessions and ceased to be driven by carnal desires, but he cautions that “we” mustn’t become complacent after having

made the first step.¹¹ Both Germanus and the reader regret “our” carelessness in the monastic life when compared to the discipline of the early anchorites.¹² Even at the threshold to pure and ceaseless prayer, Cassian regrets that “we” are still plagued by carnal desire and suggests that “we” ought to aim first for more basic prayers.¹³ The use of the first person plural allows Germanus and the reader to share the same perspective and suffer the same hopes, fears and difficulties. Germanus’ observations and experiences gradually become those of the reader. As Germanus grows, so too does the reader.

Cassian hoped that the *Conferences* would not only teach, but also provide a mechanism for the progressive self-revelation of the reader. His intended audience, however, had been shaped by a markedly different formation than he and Germanus had received. Largely ignorant of Egyptian monastic instruction, Cassian’s reader likely did not possess the literary competence necessary to embrace the dialectical structure of the text. Formed more by the prevailing caricature of Egyptian monasticism than by the teaching of the *abbas*, it would have been difficult for Cassian’s Gallic reader to empathize with Germanus’ circumstances and frame of mind. This gulf between the circumstances of reader and the role he was to play posed a grave problem. If the situation of Germanus were so far removed from that of the reader that the monastic teaching ceased to be relevant, then there would be little to encourage the reader to participate in the dialogue. The interaction that Cassian hoped to facilitate between the reader and the *abba*, between the reader and the text itself, would therefore not occur. Such a failure to establish an affinity between the reader and Germanus would vitiate both

the structured act of reading and the teaching that depended so heavily upon it.

It was therefore necessary for Cassian to establish some connection, some sort of link between the ideas of the reader and those of the interlocutor he is to become. A common point of reference was necessary to allow the reader to make the leap from his own situation to the situation of the companions described in the text.¹⁴ Cassian facilitated this leap by arranging the *Conferences* in a narrative that begins when the companions' life in the desert begins and ends just before their departure from Egypt. When Germanus and Cassian sit at the feet of *abba* Moses at the beginning of the first *Conference*, they confidently proclaim that they are willing to endure any hardship for the sake of the kingdom of God. Victims of a poor monastic formation in Bethlehem and the erroneous portrayal of *anachoresis* popular at the time, they mistakenly regard themselves as mature monks who have embraced the monastic life and fully understand its practices and goals. This confidence is soon dispelled, however, and they quickly learn that they know almost nothing of either the end or the immediate goal of monasticism. The companions' conversation with *abba* Moses leads to both dismay and hope. While they are dismayed by the depth of their own ignorance, they find hope in the fact that they have finally been put on the true path to the kingdom of God.

Cassian continues throughout the first set of *Conferences* to paint Germanus and his younger self as barely trained novices who know little of monastic practices or the reasons for them. Their knowledge is fragmentary at best, and what little knowledge they possess

makes them impatient and difficult to form rather than wise. While they desire to cling to God in prayer, they know little of the purity of heart that is necessary for such prayer.¹⁵ Although they regard themselves sufficiently mature to set out on their own, they soon learn that they must seek an elder to lead them.¹⁶ Of the three renunciations that all monks must make, the companions have succeeded in only the first (the renunciation of worldly goods). They have not attained the second (renunciation of sin) and have barely heard of the third (withdrawal from present and visible things to what is invisible).¹⁷ While able to recognize that scripture might contain spiritual meaning beyond the literal word, they frequently misconstrue even its most basic meaning. While they might occasionally be swept up in rapturous prayer, at other times they can barely pray at all.¹⁸ In the fourth *Conference* *abba* Daniel praises Germanus because he has finally recognized the depth of his ignorance.¹⁹

The companions have not even grasped what Cassian taught in his *Institutes*. The fifth *Conference* provides a summary of spiritual warfare discussed in *Institutes* 5-12. In the sixth Germanus asks why God would send forth evil into the world, a question that should not be asked by someone who has fully grasped the discussion of divine wrath in *Institute* 8.²⁰ In the seventh *Conference* Germanus laments that time and solitude have taught him only what he is unable to be.²¹ In the ninth he complains that he is still afflicted by carnal desire (the topic of *Institutes* 5 and 6) and that he has not achieved the prayer of the anchorite.²² It is not until the last *Conference* of the set that Germanus is praised for his wisdom. Though he has not gained the purity or perfection of the inner man and he is still ignorant of how to pray without ceasing, Germanus has at last learned to ask the proper questions. This marks a

turning point in his spiritual journey and *abba* Serapion finally regards him as worthy to learn the deepest mysteries of the monastic life.²³

The Journey of the Reader

The first ten *Conferences* encompass the monastic life from the companions' ignorance even of the immediate goal of such a life to their possession of the purity necessary for ceaseless prayer. These *Conferences* occur at key stages of the companions' growth, and are therefore capable of engaging the reader at the various stages of his own spiritual development. The questions and immature expectations of the young Germanus reflect those of a younger reader. As the reader progresses in his vocation, he can continue to appropriate the maturing Germanus' words as his own.²⁴ This only addresses one problem, however. While situating the dialogues at particular stages of the reader's spiritual journey might encourage the empathy of individual readers at different times, it risks leaving some of the dialogues unfulfilled. The content of a later work might exceed a younger reader's capacity for understanding, or a more mature reader might not condescend to imagine himself as the youthful and uncomprehending Germanus. Cassian was still faced with the task of encouraging his reader to participate in all of the dialogues, not simply those that might engage him whenever he picked up the text to read.

To address this, Cassian asks his reader to abandon any progress he has made in the monastic life and to undertake a new novitiate, beginning with the *Institutes* and culminating in the *Conferences*. The reader thereby approaches the *Institutes* and first few *Conferences* with the same ignorance

and unrealistic expectations that Germanus and Cassian themselves possessed when they undertook their journey through the Egyptian desert. By embodying the content of the text, the reader will receive a new formation, this time according to the institutes of the Egyptian elders. Moving systematically through the *Conferences*, the reader accompanies Cassian and Germanus on their spiritual journey from ignorance to true knowledge. As Germanus matured, so too does the reader. Adopting the discipline that Germanus himself adopted, and begging *logoi* from the *abbas* just as Germanus had begged, the reader increasingly identifies with the despair and triumph, the confusion and enlightenment of Germanus himself. The self of the reader gradually becomes the self of the text, and as the text progresses toward the key to pure and ceaseless prayer, so too does the reader.

Such a scheme for reading means that the *Conferences* are not to be read randomly. Nor are they to be read all at once. The reader is to apply what he has read, just as Germanus applied what he had heard from the *abbas*. The *Conferences* trace Germanus' spiritual journey along a spiralling path to pure and ceaseless prayer and Cassian addresses his reader as though he, too, is following that path. To become a participant in the dialogues, the reader must correct his habits, calm the disturbances that stand in the way of prayer, and cultivate purity of heart and mind. Both Germanus and the reader shed their outward concerns and become increasingly oriented toward their interior lives. While initially able to achieve pure prayer only occasionally and as if by chance, they gradually ascend to the goal of ceaseless prayer. Initially limited to the contemplation of the lives of saints, they arrive ultimately at the contemplation of the transfigured Christ.²⁵ Pricked by carnal desire throughout the *Conferences*, they

eventually show evidence of having very nearly attained the purity of apostolic charity.²⁶

Cassian's demand for a reciprocal relationship between reading and the embodiment of the life described in the text permeates the *Conferences*. *Abba* Moses reveals the immediate aim of the monastic life only after observing the zeal of Germanus to practice such a life. It must be assumed that the same obligation lay upon the reader, for otherwise Cassian would himself risk the same fate that Moses had feared.²⁷ The growing purity of Germanus and Cassian convinces *abba* Isaac that he puts neither himself nor his disciples at risk by revealing the key to pure prayer.²⁸ It is the purity of the reader that assures Cassian that he, too, bears no risk.

Reading the *Conferences* in this way means that it might take many months, years, or even a lifetime, to complete them. The first *Institutes* pertain to the novitiate, which Cassian described as requiring at least a year. *Conference* 10 culminates in the pure prayer achieved only by a few of the elders. Such an understanding of reading might seem unlikely at first, but one need only consider the story of Pambo to place it in its proper context. Pambo asked an *abba* to provide a Psalm for meditation. No sooner did the *abba* begin to recite the Psalm, however, than Pambo interrupted him and asked him to stop. Pambo regarded the first verse itself as sufficient for meditation and did not want to hear more until he mastered what he had already heard. Six months were to pass before Pambo returned for more of the Psalm.²⁹ Reading the *Conferences* was to encompass the monastic life they described.

The Transformation of the Reader

Although he asks his reader to adopt Germanus' initial naivete as his own, Cassian does not depend solely upon shared ignorance to establish an empathy between the two. Lack of knowledge does not necessarily mean a *tabula rasa*. Even if the reader could abandon, at least conceptually, what he had already been taught, he could not entirely set aside the hopes and expectations that had led him to take up the monastic life.³⁰ Rather than ask his reader to abandon his hopes and dreams, Cassian anticipated that his Gallic reader would bring to the text assumptions and expectations drawn from his own experience and the Latin monastic literature available at the time. This literature described Egyptian practices in terms of a rigid distinction between anchorites and cenobites, excessive veneration of the desert as the special residence of God, and asceticism of heroic proportions. Cassian does not immediately attack these views as unrealistic. He instead uses them to cultivate further an empathy between the reader and Germanus, between the self of the reader and the self of the text. Cassian describes Germanus as not merely ignorant of monastic practices, but also as possessing the same erroneous and unrealistic expectations that the reader would possess. Thus Cassian's Gallic reader initially found his own thoughts echoed by Germanus, and he could more easily appropriate Germanus' voice as his own.

This does not mean that Cassian merely confirms the images the reader brought to the text. He instead transforms them. Over the course of the *Conferences* Cassian actively undermines some of his reader's most cherished presuppositions. By doing this, however, he also undermines

the original basis for the empathy of the reader for the text. A new set of images must therefore be provided; a set, moreover, that can resolve the tension of the reader who has been cast adrift from the norms he has brought to the text. To borrow a term from Wolfgang Iser, Cassian accomplishes this by describing Germanus' journey and conversations in a way that "prestructures" the experience of his reader.³¹ Germanus is portrayed as maturing and being transformed by a new way of life, and the continued appropriation of Germanus' voice requires the reader to apply what Germanus has learned. The reader is asked to mature as Germanus himself had matured. Through the act of reading, the reader sheds the misconceptions he has brought to the text and adopts the institutes of the Egyptians.

Cassian challenges the images of the reader and questions the validity of his knowledge in the same way that his own had been challenged by the desert fathers. He creates a new set of images that encourage the reader to identify with the self of the text. He then encourages structured activities in the reader to reorient his perspective and create a new disposition. This is not to say that the reader's own disposition ever disappears entirely. Again borrowing Iser's terms, Cassian creates a tension between the role assumed by the reader and the reader's habitual orientation.

The resultant tension calls for a resolution. The resolution, however, cannot come about simply by restoring habitual orientation to the self which had been temporarily relegated to the background. Playing the role involves incorporating the new experience. Consequently, the reader is affected by the very role he has been given to play, and his being affected

does not reinvolve the habitual orientation but mobilizes the spontaneity of the self.³²

In Cassian's terms, if one hopes truly to understand the Egyptian monks and their practices, then "let him first hasten to take up their purpose with similar zeal and with a similar way of life, and then he will at last discover that those things which seemed beyond human capability are not only possible but even most pleasant."³³

In this way Cassian was able to recreate as an act of reading the interaction between master and student that was the foundation of Egyptian monastic instruction. Arriving at a crisis in his vocation, or needing to learn the answer to a pressing question, the reader approaches an *abba* who stands as the embodiment of virtue. The *abba* discerns the desire of the reader and offers appropriate advice. The reader then goes away to apply the advice, not returning to the text (or seeking further advice from the *abba*) until he has mastered what he has been taught. By anticipating what a Gallic monk might bring to the text, and by recommending the discipline his reader should adopt, Cassian is able to foresee many of the problems and dilemmas his reader will face during the course of reading the *Conferences*.

It must be admitted, however, that this recreation is partial at best. While Cassian might have been able to set out the topography of a spiritual journey that would hopefully become the reader's own, he still could not predict precisely when or even if the reader might undertake each stage of the journey. The reader, not the *abba*, must discern whether he has mastered what he has been taught and can move on, or whether he should pause and not seek knowledge for which

he is unprepared. In the end, Cassian is left with the need to trust his student in a way similar to an Egyptian *abba*. It was necessary for both teachers to be confident that their students approached in good faith. If a student should fail to follow their advice, their instruction would be useless and possibly even harmful. If a student were dishonest about his needs, then both Cassian and the *abba* risked being unable to discern his true plight and offering sacred mysteries to one who should not possess them. For the dialogue between *abba* and student, or between reader and text, to succeed, the one seeking advice must faithfully fulfill his role.

READING THE *INSTITUTES*

There remains a problem that has yet to be addressed. It was mentioned earlier that Cassian calls upon his reader to begin at the beginning, to abandon what he has learned and undergo a new novitiate. The *Conferences*, however, do not address the novitiate. For this one must turn to the *Institutes*, which Cassian insists must be read and mastered before turning to the more advanced teaching of the *Conferences*. It is therefore the *Institutes* that provide the foundation for monastic life. More important, it is the *Institutes* that must establish the crucial relationship between instruction and *praxis*, and between the act of reading and lived experience of the reader. If one were to accept that Cassian encouraged a particular kind of interaction between the reader and the text in his *Conferences*, then one should hope to find evidence of a similar interaction in the *Institutes*. The *Institutes*, however, are neither dialogues nor narratives; they are instead a set of discursive treatises and they cannot engage the reader in a manner identical to that of the *Conferences*. The *Institutes* must therefore be examined to determine if they assume a reciprocal relationship between reading and *praxis*; if they provide a mechanism for discerning whether or not the reader has successfully applied what he has been taught; and most important, if there exists a voice in the text that may in some way be appropriated by the reader.

The Novitiate

In his preface to the *Institutes* Cassian contends that he has been away from Egypt too long to remember much of what he learned,

especially since the reason for these things can in no way be taught or understood or kept in the memory by idle meditation and verbal teaching. For it consists entirely in experience and practice alone and, as these things cannot be taught save by one who is experienced in them, so they cannot be perceived or understood except by one who has tried with equal exertion and toil to grasp them; however, if they are not frequently discussed and worn smooth by constant conversation with spiritual men, they will quickly fade again through carelessness of mind.³⁴

Cassian thus declares from the beginning his fundamental belief that monastic instruction is inseparable from *praxis*. Reading the *Institutes* is not to be a passive exercise. If the reader hopes to master fully the institutes of the Egyptians, then strenuous effort and frequent conversation must accompany the reading of the text. The principles espoused in the text are to be frequently examined and assiduously applied. The *Institutes* can be understood only if progress in reading be accompanied by a corresponding progress in one's spiritual life.

This is not an easy command to follow, for Cassian initially cast his work "as though [writing] to an inexperienced monastery and to those who are in truth athirst."³⁵ The practices described in the first four *Institutes* are for infants, unfamiliar with even the first letters or symbols of the spiritual life.³⁶ If the reader were to practice in his own life the instruction contained in these early *Institutes*, he would need to adopt as his own the spiritual infancy described in the text. This would require the reader to abandon any progress he has made in his spiritual life and once again become a novice. Rehearsing his vocation from its very inception,

Cassian's reader would receive a new formation. This new formation, carried out according to the institutes of the Egyptians, will provide the basis for a long, unwavering monastic life and the attainment of the heights of perfection.³⁷

Cassian's preface to his *Institutes* thereby serves as a preface to a new model of Latin monastic literature. He calls for a reciprocal relationship between reading and *praxis* that goes far beyond the demand, common at the time, to practice the principles espoused in the text. Instead, the *Institutes* begin where the monastic life itself begins. The text condescends to the reader as though speaking to one who has just renounced the world, and the reader is expected to assume this role.

In his first *Institute* Cassian develops further the role his intended reader was to play. The monastic habit, Cassian explains, is a garment rooted in a tradition that spans from the Old Testament prophets to contemporary monks.³⁸ The several layers of the garment possess layers of meaning ranging from the regulation of character to a constant reminder of the wearer's vocation. Moreover, each of the habit's constituent parts, such as the cowl or girdle, points the way toward spiritual knowledge by inspiring the memorization and repetition of biblical passages.³⁹

Cassian begins and ends the *Institute* with the two-fold girdle. In the first chapter, we see its biblical precedents; in the last, its deeper meaning within a biblical context.⁴⁰ The reader is thereby led from the adoption of a custom because of tradition to the spiritual meaning of that tradition. This helps to establish the general principle that customs based on biblical precedent and more recent tradition have deeper, spiritual

meanings that will be revealed only according to the zeal with which one practices them in daily life.⁴¹

The next two *Institutes* assume that this lesson has been grasped.⁴² Their ostensible purpose is to lay out the routine of prayer a novice would undertake after he has been received into the monastery. In a manner similar to his first *Institute*, Cassian uses this single theme to introduce much of the discipline of the monastic community. Discussing the number of nocturnal psalms, for example, he introduces the qualities of a good abbot.⁴³ Describing the manner in which the Psalms should be sung, he sets out the proper behavior of the monk during the office.⁴⁴ Depicting individual prayer in the cell, he recommends manual labor as a practice integrally related to private nocturnal prayer.⁴⁵ In brief asides, he describes how younger monks are to conduct themselves and how their private prayer life is to be organized.⁴⁶

In these *Institutes* Cassian weaves several themes around a single thread. This is not merely a literary device by which a variety of topics can be organized. Prayer and psalmody provide unity and coherence to the life of the monk and are the cornerstone of the community itself. The interweaving of prayer with the rudiments of monastic discipline reflects the training of the novice. Supervised by an elder, he would begin the routine of offices immediately and his life would be arranged according to them. Other precepts of the monastic life would be introduced more slowly according to his ability to comprehend them. The structure of Cassian's text therefore parallels the life being attempted by the reader. A reciprocal relationship is established between the experience of the reader and the reading of the text, and the reader develops

both personally and communally as the fabric of the text is discussed and practiced in his own life.

Having laid out a daily routine, Cassian next takes up the training of the novice. Kept as far from others as possible, the novice owes his elder complete obedience.⁴⁷ Cassian describes this obedience as the highest of all virtues and claims that in Egypt the novices obey their elders' orders as though issued from God in Heaven.⁴⁸ The Egyptians

prefer it [obedience] not only to manual work and reading and the silence and quiet of the cells, but also to all virtues, so that they consider everything to be placed after it and are content to undergo all suffering so that they are not seen to have violated this good in any way.”⁴⁹

The novice consults his elder about even his most basic needs and at no time is he to act on his own wishes (*uoluntates*).⁵⁰ This obedience pertains to the novice's interior as well as exterior life. Allowed neither discretion nor freedom of action, the novice must reveal all his thoughts, even the most basic or trivial, to his elder so that their origins might be interpreted and explained.⁵¹ While Cassian encourages the novice to control his thoughts, he describes them as “dangerous schemes” and “vicious designs” (*conspirationi noxiae* and *consilii prau*) rather than as vices.⁵² Such thoughts must be confessed to the elder in an exchange that resembles therapy more than a petition for forgiveness and redemption. The probing questions of a discerning elder help the offending novice to understand the origins of his thoughts and to avoid similar circumstances in the future. Like idle talk and other activities, such thoughts can be regulated by the habituation of monastic practices. The novice must repeat

psalms and work continuously in order to cultivate habits that will lead to a new disposition. Although largely external acts, these practices encourage internal discipline.

The disciplines Cassian describes in the first four *Institutes* are to be practiced by the reader with the same spirit of obedience that the novice owes his elder. Both the authority of the elder and the institutes of the Egyptians are of divine origin.⁵³ Egyptian practices are even to take precedence over those

demanding by the local abbot.⁵⁴ All readers, even the leaders of monasteries, must adopt the discipline of the novitiate. Like those he hopes to govern, the abbot must acquire the virtues of humility and obedience and master the *Institutes*. Only after he has proven himself to all will he be able to teach or to govern others. Echoing his preface, Cassian declares that one must learn before he can teach.⁵⁵

Cassian concludes the first four *Institutes*, and therefore the novitiate itself, with a speech by Pinufius. An abbot of a community at Panephrisis, Pinufius desperately sought the peace of a more humble station. He twice fled his responsibilities at Panephrisis, each time to be found by his monks and brought home. His second flight took him to Palestine, where he came to reside temporarily with Cassian and Germanus.⁵⁶ The two would later seek out Pinufius during their travels through the Delta and witness Pinufius' speech at the induction of a novice into his monastery.

Pinufius' speech encapsulates the material discussed in the first four *Institutes*. In them, Cassian lays a foundation for monastic life in which renunciation, obedience and humility are the highest virtues. They are the foundation of abbatial

authority, of the disposition of the individual monk, and of the community itself. Mental and spiritual discipline are little more than the restriction of one's wishes and the confession of all things to an elder. The novice possesses no discernment or judgment of his own and little introspection is required of him. While the first elements of self-evaluation are encouraged, this is limited to the analysis of external behavior. The elder, rather than the renunciant, is concerned with the movements of the soul.⁵⁷

Pinufius' speech also marks a significant transition both in the text and in the life of the reader. Cassian begins his *Institutes* by addressing his reader as an untrained infant who hopes to achieve the heights of Christian perfection. More important, Cassian describes himself as sharing in this same spiritual *infantia*. Using "we" to include himself among his readers, Cassian does not represent himself as a veteran of the Egyptian desert or as the founder of two monasteries. He instead claims to be plagued by thoughts he would hesitate to reveal to an elder.⁵⁸ Like his reader, Cassian is unable to offer proper obedience to an abbot.⁵⁹ Cassian is prone to drowsiness during nocturnal prayers.⁶⁰ He shares with his contemporaries in Gaul an improper desire for possessions, and even identifies himself as a Gaul looking from a distance upon the customs of the Egyptians.⁶¹ Cassian is not an *abba* writing for the instruction of others. He is himself a novice who possesses the same goals and suffers the same difficulties as his reader.

This identification of author and reader, or the self in the text and the self of the reader, is evident in the record of Pinufius' speech. Cassian again uses the first person plural, but the emphasis has been subtly changed. Earlier Cassian's "we"

had encompassed himself and the reader who shares with him the struggles of the novitiate. Now, however, the “we” invites the reader to become Cassian’s companion in the desert. Cassian first describes Pinufius’ flight from abbatial responsibility and then their encounter at Bethlehem.

Through Cassian, the reader lives vicariously with Pinufius in Palestine and later stands in the monastery at Panephysis, a privileged witness to the consecration of a brother. During Pinufius’ speech, Cassian withdraws himself from the reader’s attention and becomes a spectator, allowing Pinufius to speak directly. Pinufius is rendered almost physically present. Silent, the reader sits next to Cassian at Pinufius’ feet. With Cassian, he listens to the old man’s words and is inspired to examine the depth of his own commitment.

The setting of Pinufius’ speech is similar to that of the *Conferences*. Cassian describes the physical environment; he relates the elder’s virtues; he allows the elder to assess the needs of the one seeking advice; and the elder speaks in his own voice. As a novice, however, the reader is not yet able to participate in these conferences. The consecration ceremony provides a workable compromise. The setting is established, the needs of the initiate made known and the speech recorded. Cassian and his reader, however, are witnesses rather than participants.

Pinufius’ speech brings to a close the early formation of the reader. It recalls the stages of the spiritual life through which the reader has progressed as he has progressed through the text itself. Like Cassian before him, the reader has passed through his novitiate and been trained in the institutes of the Egyptian *coenohia*. In order to determine if the reader has successfully applied what he has read and has adopted the

humility and obedience proper to a novice, Cassian (through Pinufius) describes the virtue's external manifestations. These signs of humility, which will be quoted often in Latin monastic literature, offer the reader a standard by which he can gauge his progress.⁶² Just as in the *Conferences* to come, Cassian provides an opportunity for the reader to discern his condition and to judge whether he can profitably move on.

The Beginnings of Spiritual Warfare

The last eight *Institutes* no longer describe the institutes of the Egyptians, just as they no longer address a reader who is serving his novitiate. Instead they speak to one who has gained some maturity in his spiritual life and can now participate in the initial skirmishes of the war against the vices. This shift in content also encourages a shift in the role of the reader. Early in the fifth *Institute* Cassian records a speech attributed to Antony.⁶³ In this speech Antony addresses a monk who has “learned by an examination of discretion, [and] is now able to stand on his own judgment, and to arrive at the summit of *anachoresis*, [and who] ought in no way to seek all kinds of virtues from one man however great.”⁶⁴ Cassian is no longer writing to a novice under the tutelage of a single elder and possessing no judgment of his own. He instead addresses a reader who has proven himself as a novice and can now exercise his own judgment. Recalling Paul's athletic imagery, Cassian likens his reader to a youth who has proven himself to the president of the games and is now permitted to wander among the athletes.⁶⁵ No longer subject to a single elder, the reader must discern the particular abilities of individual monks and learn from each the virtue he best exemplifies. Moreover, the reader should possess at least some ability to discern his own

condition and the motives for his actions. Gluttony, the first of the vices and the principal topic of the *Institute*, cannot be defeated merely by obeying a universal rule. Differences in age, health, disposition and environment require flexibility in fasting. True fasting will arise only from the judgment of the reader's conscience (*iudicium conscientiae*).⁶⁶

By addressing his reader as though he has moved beyond his novitiate and now lives within the monastic community, Cassian maintains the reciprocal relationship between progress in the monastic life and progress in the text. The reader has acquired the first elements of discretion and no longer owes absolute obedience to a single mentor. Similarly, absolute obedience to a universal and over-arching authority in the text is no longer profitable. Cassian now portrays monks who excel in and teach about particular virtues, just as individual monks would excel at different virtues within the community. Antony's speech performs a necessary function at the beginning of a new phase of the spiritual life by removing restrictions that had been placed on the reader as a novice and opening a new path for a young monk.

The large collection of anecdotes at the end of the *Institute* provides a practical exercise in the use of this discretion and offers a key to understanding the structure of Cassian's text as a whole. At first glance, this collection seems disorganized and somewhat out of place, not least because few of these anecdotes pertain directly to gluttony.⁶⁷ Upon further reflection, however, they can be grouped into related themes and they fall into discernible patterns.⁶⁸ The first few stories are taken from Cassian's own experiences in Egypt and relate how the rules of fasting were abandoned in favor of hospitality.⁶⁹ When recounting these events, Cassian again

uses the first person plural. In a manner similar to how he included the reader among Pinufius' audience, Cassian this time invites the reader into his Egyptian cell. The reader encounters the *abbas* much as Cassian encountered them. Both Cassian and the reader benefit from the hospitality of an *abba* and later the reader as well as Cassian will be chastened for preferring sleep to vigils.

The first of the elders to be considered is John, an *abba* of great age and virtue. When John heard *abba* Paesius claim that the sun had not seen him eat for forty years, he was able to reply that for an equal length of time the sun had not seen him angry.⁷⁰ Cassian then explains how John had reached such heights of virtue. When asked on his deathbed to give his monks a word, he replied with what amounts to a succinct summary of the first four *Institutes*: "Never, he said, did I do my own will nor did I teach anything that I had not first done myself."⁷¹ The foundation laid by John's unquestioning obedience and the application of what he had been taught withstood the test of time. He had maintained a humble spirit and also excelled in other virtues. That John and Paesius each excelled in a different virtue is entirely in accord with Antony's speech.

Cassian next considers Machetes, who was blessed with the gift of being able to fall asleep during idle chatter and to remain awake during spiritual conferences.⁷² The two stories that follow reveal different aspects of this virtue.

The first explains that on the three occasions that Machetes spoke against another monk, it was revealed to him that he was or would be entangled in this same sin.⁷³ The second again relates Machetes' miraculous ability to listen to spiritual conferences and reminds the reader to pay careful attention to

the words of the elders.⁷⁴ Cassian then tells of a monk who received letters from his family and burnt them unread.⁷⁵ This recalls the need for complete renunciation and links physical exile to the internal quiet of the soul.

This is followed with yet another cluster of tales that focus on the gifted exegete Theodore, whose skill was gained from prayer and fasting rather than from any formal education.⁷⁶ Theodore explains that purity of heart rather than learning is necessary for scriptural exegesis. There are many differences and errors among the commentators because most of them care nothing for the purification of the mind and “rushing to interpret [the Scriptures], and forming ideas that, in proportion to the grossness and worldliness of their heart, are different from and contrary to the faith or to each other, they cannot comprehend the light of truth.”⁷⁷ Theodore then reprimands Cassian for sleeping after Vespers rather than maintaining a vigil. As with the account of Machetes, the first story of the set establishes the elder’s virtue and subsequent stories elaborate upon it. The account of some anchorites living on an island in the Delta follows a similar pattern.⁷⁸

These stories are directed toward one who is just beginning spiritual combat. From John, the reader is reminded of the fruits of obedience and humility he has so recently acquired himself. Machetes tells him to pay close attention to conferences and to refrain from feeling superior to others. Theodore reminds him that prayer and purity of heart are the true source of biblical knowledge. Even though educated, Cassian will not gain further understanding if he should continue to sleep.

The last story of the collection is poignant evidence of Cassian's intended audience. It tells of two novices who were ordered by John to deliver especially fine figs to an old and enfeebled monk. On their way the two became lost and starved to death, choosing to lose their life on earth rather than violate their *abba's* command.⁷⁹ At first, this story would seem bizarre in light of Cassian's repeated calls for moderation. However, the *abba* who gave the command was John, whose own humility and judgment was beyond question. The key to the story would seem to be that the monks were young. It serves as a caution to the reader, also a young monk, that obedience is still necessary. Freedom of judgment cannot be invoked without it having been earned.

The arrangement of Cassian's anecdotes confirms Antony's view of discretion. The reader first learns of an elder's special charism as though discerning it himself. The elder then provides instruction, either by word or by example, that is relevant to his particular virtue. Thus, both Antony's discourse and the collection of stories fit neatly into Cassian's larger scheme. They also confirm Cassian's belief that example is a necessary part of teaching and that the authority of a monk's words is diminished if no account of his character is provided.⁸⁰ There is a parallel relationship between what the reader performs as an act of reading and what he is to perform within his own community.

The addition of these examples makes this by far the longest of the *Institutes*. This is appropriate, for it is one of the most important. The *Institute* is not simply concerned with gluttony; it serves as a transition from the regulation of individual and communal activity to the regulation of the disturbances of the soul. The stories look back, both to remind

the reader of the first four *Institutes* and to reinforce more recent lessons about gluttony. They also look forward, for in them Cassian alludes both to greater spiritual combat and to topics to be considered in the *Conferences*. In this *Institute* Cassian develops an intricate introduction both to gluttony and to spiritual warfare. He releases the monk from the restrictions of his earlier status as a novice and shows him the first steps to discretion. He explores gluttony, but within the context of a more well-rounded exploration of carnal desire. Finally, he hints at the perseverance and further growth that will be necessary before gluttony and the other vices can be rooted out. It would seem odd, then, if the stories that conclude the discussion *were* limited to the single theme of gluttony.⁸¹

Praxis and Exegesis

Cassian's discussion of anger in *Institute* 8 is similar to his discussion of gluttony, for both introduce new stages of spiritual warfare. To this point, Cassian has discussed gluttony, fornication and covetousness, all of which belong to or afflict the concupiscible part of the soul. Anger, on the other hand, pertains to the irascible part of the soul and the struggle against it requires at least some mastery of the lower vices. Cassian's discussion of anger also inaugurates a new maturity in his reader, for in this and the following *Institutes* the reader will be entrusted with greater independence and discretion as well as the key to a more profound reading of scripture.

The terms used to describe anger's deleterious effects are more vivid than those Cassian used when describing earlier vices, and they are oriented more toward the interior life. If

anger remains in our heart and blinds the eye of our minds, Cassian writes, then

we can neither acquire the judgment of right discretion nor possess the insight of honest contemplation or ripeness of council, nor can we be partakers of life or steadfast in justice, nor indeed can we be repositories of spiritual and true light.⁸²

In the end, if anger should be allowed to darken our soul, then we will lose the purity of our mind and never think to pray.⁸³ This language describes a stage of the spiritual life not previously addressed; one in which the vices disturb the mind and inhibit the infusion of “true light.” The reader is no longer thought to be prodded by fear of God and compunction over carnal passions. Now inspired by love of virtue, he has made considerable progress toward the purity of mind that is necessary for an acceptable sacrifice of true prayer. Instead of looking to purity as a distant goal inspired by fear, Cassian now describes purity as something that has been at least partly achieved and that might be lost by harboring anger.

That Cassian is now addressing a more mature reader is also reflected in his admonition to remain in the *coenohium*. Cassian’s earlier discussion of the need for monastic community had been in the context of a desire to return to the world. Monks who make poor beginnings are unable or unwilling to curb the carnal vices that afflict them. They might even distort the true meaning of scripture, such as Paul’s praise of those who contribute from their wealth to the Christians in Jerusalem in order to justify their return to the world to earn an income.⁸⁴ Now, however, Cassian warns of a new danger: the immoderate desire to become an anchorite

before one has acquired a proper foundation. Cassian no longer fears that his reader will stumble in the first steps of renunciation and return defeated to the world. He instead worries that his reader's initial success against the carnal vices might lead him to undertake a more rigorous life before he is ready.⁸⁵

In his discussion of anger, Cassian also introduces a new approach to scripture. In a long digression, he vigorously argues against the claim that God can suffer anger and then expands this discussion to include anthropomorphic descriptions of God more generally. God, who is immutable, cannot be moved by the disturbance or *pathos* of anger.⁸⁶ "When we read of the wrath and fury of God, we ought to understand [it] not *anthropomorphos*, that is, according to the meanness of human disturbance, but in a way worthy of God, who is free from all disturbance."⁸⁷ Scripture ascribes anger and other emotions to God because we cannot comprehend the true nature of God. Just as when we read of God's physical form, we must understand these attributions of human emotion metaphorically (*figuraliter*).⁸⁸ It is noteworthy that while Cassian describes anger as a *pathos*, he avoids describing God's immovability as *apatheia*.

Continuing his more sophisticated explication of scripture, Cassian then turns to Paul's warning not to allow the sun to set on one's anger (Eph. 4:6). Recognizing that this passage might be misinterpreted to allow someone to be angry at least for a little while, Cassian clarifies any potential ambiguity by interpreting the sun as Jesus, who is the sun of righteousness. The sun setting on one's anger therefore signifies Jesus abandoning, or allowing to grow dark, the mind disturbed by anger.⁸⁹ The identification of Christ as the sun of

righteousness then helps to unlock an enigmatic text in Malachi.⁹⁰ Cassian next interprets the sun as the mind (*nous*), calling this its tropological sense (*secundum tropicum sensum*).⁹¹ In this interpretation the action is reversed, for anger darkens the mind. In other words, judgment is eclipsed by wrath.

In the subsequent *Institute*, Cassian describes dejection in the terms of Proverbs 25:20, which likens the dejected heart to a garment destroyed by moths or wood eaten by worms.⁹² The garment is interpreted first as a metaphor for the heart and then as signifying the priestly office. Just as Aaron's clothing received the oil of his anointing, so the heart must be fit to receive the Holy Spirit. If a moth-eaten garment cannot be worn by a priest, then a dejected heart cannot receive the Spirit. The metaphor of the destroyed wood is also given a heightened meaning. As wormwood cannot be used to adorn an earthly temple, so the dejected heart is unfit for building a spiritual temple.

Institute 10 takes this new, specifically monastic exegesis a step further by offering an extended analysis of Paul's call for Christians to work steadily and not become busy-bodies. Cassian interprets Paul as though he wrote concerning the monastic vice of *acedia*, a kind of spiritual torpor that can be remedied by continuous work. Paul's command for Christians to be quiet becomes an injunction to remain in one's cell. The command to work with one's hands becomes a command to labor continuously.⁹³

Finally, Cassian also suggests a sophisticated understanding of Acts 20:35, which states that it is more blessed to give than to receive. In his discourse on covetousness he had interpreted

this passage within the historical context of the Jerusalem community. He here adds the deeper meaning of the shared poverty of the true donor and the recipient.⁹⁴ In *Institute* 12 he will write that those who cannot understand the true meaning of this passage have failed in their spiritual life.⁹⁵ In this same *Institute* Cassian will extend allegorical interpretation to historical events. While the defeat of Joash by the Syrians provides a concrete example of the dangers of pride, the story can also be read to signify the battle between the soul (Joash) and the vices (the Syrians).⁹⁶

Before introducing the struggle against anger, biblical exegesis had been largely of a literal kind. Having progressed in his spiritual life, the reader must now turn his attention more fully toward prayer and biblical study. Shedding any misconceptions about the nature of God, the reader must penetrate the mysteries of scripture in order to gain true knowledge of God. Cassian had earlier described Theodore, an *abba* whose knowledge of scripture was gained through prayer and discipline rather than academic expertise.⁹⁷ Now, Cassian has shown in a concrete way the reciprocal relationship between purity of heart and spiritual knowledge.

Looking Ahead to the *Conferences*

It is noteworthy that while the final two *Institutes* address an even more advanced stage of spiritual combat, they do not inaugurate a corresponding development in the progress of the reader. Vainglory and pride affect the intelligible part of the soul and pose the greatest threat to those who have come close to achieving perfection.⁹⁸ Given the pattern that Cassian established in his earlier *Institutes*, one would expect that his discussion of these last two vices would correspond to a

similar development in the reader. Instead, Cassian clearly states that vainglory and pride have little to do with the reader, for he has not achieved the level of perfection that is most vulnerable to these vices.

This does not mean that Cassian has abandoned the structured activity between the reader and the text. While these last vices address a stage of monastic life that transcends anything the reader can be expected to have achieved, they also afflict those who have just begun to make spiritual progress.⁹⁹ While not himself subject to their more advanced attacks, the reader has gained sufficient understanding to perceive how the vices might afflict one who is more advanced. After discussing the more advanced attacks of pride, Cassian returns to the level of the reader when he speaks of its more lowly manifestations.

On the other hand, he [Satan] does not deem worthy to tempt us in this way, but overthrows us, who are still entangled in earthly passions, by a grosser and, I should say, a carnal pride. And so according to my promise I think it is also necessary to say something concerning that by which we or men of our measure, and especially the minds of youths and beginners, are usually imperiled.¹⁰⁰

Cassian then recounts how this lower form of pride takes possession of the lukewarm monk and corrupts him. The description serves as a synopsis of the *Institutes*. The monk first makes a poor beginning and is unable to abandon his worldly haughtiness and possessions.¹⁰¹ He does not recognize that he must die in the body and conquer the carnal vices. Failure to make a complete renunciation leads to avarice.¹⁰² Gradually, the monk becomes wrathful and can no longer be taught anything of the spiritual life.

This tale looks both forward and back. It recalls the lessons of the *Institutes*, for the monk's descent into depravity follows the course of Cassian's analysis of the vices. The decline is described in vivid detail and special attention is given to the monk's growing impatience with conversation and spiritual guidance. The prideful monk resents instruction and deliberately twists its meaning, using it as a weapon against others. The conferences soon become harmful and it would have been better for the one possessed by pride never to have begun them.

The tale looks forward by warning the reader to reflect upon his condition before proceeding to the *Conferences*. The *Conferences* may not simply be impenetrable; they may actually cause significant harm. To aid the reader in discerning his condition, Cassian briefly lists the ways in which pride can lead to a feeling of triumph early in the spiritual journey. "For, as we said before, the state of the inner man will be known from his outward behavior (*motus*). Therefore, that carnal pride which we mentioned earlier is shown by these signs."¹⁰³ The beginner who falls prey to pride will be loud in speech, bitter in silence, quick to laugh, morose when serious, etc. The list is then extended to describe conduct with others. Even the most spiritually dense reader might easily learn that he has not eradicated pride from his heart.

The final chapter of the section is again a call to humility.¹⁰⁴ In effect, Cassian has come full circle, for the principal virtue of the first *Institutes* is also humility. This virtue has been raised to a new level, however, and given a more profound significance. Cassian has moved beyond the humiliation of

the renunciant and the need for absolute obedience to true humility, which is the purity of heart necessary to stand before God.

READING AS MONASTIC *PRAXIS*

Although composing a set of discursive treatises, Cassian adapted an understanding of monastic reading drawn from the Origenist monks of Egypt and, more specifically, from Evagrius' *sententiae*. While he is careful to avoid terms that had become tainted with "Origenism" as well as any reference to his mentor, Cassian leads his readers through *praxis* and introspection to the purity of heart necessary for pure prayer. At first, this might not seem plausible. There is a great dissimilarity between the two authors, and their respective *corpora* do not readily invite comparison. Against Evagrius' brief, independent studies of the monastic life, the *Institutes* consist of a series of discursive treatises. Evagrius often employs aphorisms and even meter, whereas Cassian seldom employs the former and the latter not at all. Evagrius' aphorisms lend themselves to meditation and memorization in a way that Cassian's treatises do not. Finally, Evagrius wrote within a developed tradition of which most Latin readers were ignorant.

Cassian addresses each of these obstacles. While the *Institutes* do not lend themselves to memorization in the same manner as Evagrius' *sententiae*, Cassian encourages rumination through a careful use of mnemonic devices. Among these is a juxtaposition of the central themes of the discussion. The discussion of gluttony, for example, ends with a speech by Macarius that expresses the horns of the dilemma. A monk ought to practice moderation, preserving his health as though he might live for a hundred years. On the other hand, he ought to curb his passions as though he might die tomorrow.¹⁰⁵ Cassian concludes his discussion of fornication with a similar

juxtaposition of daily vigilance and nightly vigils.¹⁰⁶ Even sections within the *Institutes* are set off in a similar manner.¹⁰⁷ This framing of the central tenets of the discussion is not simply a matter of style. The memorization and repetition of these formulae call to mind other, more detailed aspects of the discussion. Cassian's repeated use of *exempla* serves a similar purpose, for they also call to mind the import of what has just been said.¹⁰⁸ For example, while Cassian's consideration of exegesis is quite involved, the stories concerning Theodore express its most salient features in a simple, easily comprehended manner.

Both Evagrius and Cassian reveal their material only gradually and in a spiralling path. Each warns of the danger of reading beyond one's ability. Only after a monk has read, understood and applied the text is he to move on. He is to struggle against new obstacles only after having overcome the last. In Egypt, the task of evaluating a younger monk's progress would have fallen on an elder. Though at times the elder was blessed with the charism of discernment, more often he was left with the task of observing his junior's behavior and evaluating his needs according to external signs.¹⁰⁹ Even the demons are restricted to this sort of observation, for God alone can penetrate the soul.¹¹⁰

In the absence of an elder, Cassian provides for a kind of self-analysis. His description of the external manifestations of the virtues, such as Pinufius' signs of humility or the outward expressions of pride, provides the reader with tools similar to those of an elder. By examining his own conduct, the reader can evaluate his progress and determine if he can proceed safely and profitably.

By calling upon his reader to appropriate the self of the text as his own, Cassian encourages the interiorization of the text itself. To facilitate this, the content of the text is accommodated to the reader, or at least to Cassian's intended historical reader. As the textual Cassian grows and matures, so too does the reader. This gradual growth and transformation leads the reader to a deeper understanding of self and of vocation, and this deeper understanding in turn facilitates the development of new modes of conduct. As the reader's understanding of himself and his vocation is transformed through the act of reading, it combines with newly formed or altered habits to create a disposition different from that which had existed before. In recognition of the growing sophistication of the reader, the content of the text itself also grows in sophistication. The reader thereby views the monastic life from a new standpoint.

The demand for a reciprocal relationship between reading and *praxis* allows Cassian to penetrate into every aspect of his reader's life.¹¹¹ Cassian calls for a change in the orientation, indeed in the very life, of his reader. Adopting the voice of the text promotes both self-sacrifice and self-knowledge. The reader sacrifices his habitual orientation toward exterior and ephemeral things to focus on what is real. He also sacrifices his self-will for the sake of obedience to the text, just as he would offer his complete obedience to an *abba*. This self-sacrifice contributes to self-knowledge, for by freeing himself from the sting of carnal desire and taming the movements of the soul, the reader attains a knowledge available only to those who have achieved purity of soul. This shift in the reader's orientation from external to internal things frees the soul from the bondage of the flesh and leads to spiritual, as opposed to carnal, knowledge. Once freed from

the burden of the flesh and able to focus his mind without distraction, the reader can cling to God in prayer. In the introduction to his *Conferences*, Cassian writes that one who has read the *Institutes* merits the name of the spiritual Jacob and can now pass on to the dignity of Israel.¹¹² In other words, Cassian assumes that reading the *Institutes* entails the embodiment of the monastic *praxis* they describe.

Psalmody and *Praxis*

Cassian borrowed his understanding of reading from a practice of psalmody common among Egyptian monks and from Origen's approach to biblical exegesis. While Cassian's borrowings from Origen will be taken up later, it will be helpful here to explore briefly the influence of psalmody. Given its foundational role in monastic life, one cannot easily suggest a direct source for Cassian's understanding of psalmody. However, in his letter to an otherwise unknown monk named Marcellinus, Athanasius offers perhaps the most complete description of the practice.

According to Athanasius, all scripture is unified by the one Spirit who inspired it and the whole of the Spirit is present in each book.¹¹³ Moreover, the Psalms cannot be distinguished merely on the basis of genre, for while the Psalms contain within themselves all the other biblical genres, these other genres often contain poetry. The psalms contain legislation, for example, and Moses composed songs.¹¹⁴ The Psalms prophesy about the life of Christ while the letters of Paul contain Christological hymns.¹¹⁵ The Psalms are unique, however, because of how they are to be read. While the narrative about Moses offers examples of conduct worthy of emulation, proper humility should prevent one from adopting

Moses' words as one's own. The Psalms, on the other hand, at least those that aren't specifically Christological, can and ought to be read as though they are the reader's own words.¹¹⁶

The Psalms encourage the appropriation of the voice of the Psalmist as one's own because they provide a vocabulary for expressing the full range of human emotion and experience.¹¹⁷ This vocabulary is important and much of the *Letter to Marcellinus* is taken up with practical advice about which Psalm to sing in a given situation. Psalm 19, for example, offers words of condolence to those who suffer. When beset by enemies, one should sing Psalm 26.¹¹⁸ God listens to those who pray with the words of the Psalms.¹¹⁹ Demons quake when a Psalm is sung but can resist attempts at exorcism when other words are used.¹²⁰

This is not to say that the Psalms merely serve as a thesaurus to express one's grief or joy. Nor are the words of the Psalms incantations to ensure that a prayer is heard or a demon properly expelled. Instead, the Psalms express the entire scope of human existence. They address the full range of human emotion and know every disposition of the soul.¹²¹ They offer a vocabulary to express the depths of the human condition and to explore what that condition might be. They help to interpret and even give meaning to one's experiences, be they exterior circumstances or interior movements of the soul. When reciting the Psalms, the Spirit who inspires them both speaks to the reader and composes the words in the reader's heart.¹²² The soul understands itself, communicates and acts according to the words of the Psalms.¹²³ Through the words of the Psalms the monk both interprets and constructs his self and his world.

The manner in which the Psalms are to be sung also touches upon the soul, for the harmony of the Psalms ought to reflect the harmony of the soul. Regaining its sense of peace by singing the Psalms, the soul leaves behind the passions that disturb it and becomes still.¹²⁴ A symbiotic relationship is established whereby the harmony of the Psalms cultivates a stillness that allows for greater exploration of one's interior life. This exploration leads to an interior harmony that is reflected in (and facilitated by) the singing of the Psalms.¹²⁵ In short, the Psalms serve as therapy for the soul. One finds in them not only a vehicle to give meaning to one's interior life, but also the means to restore harmony to a soul disturbed by passions.¹²⁶ Psalmody both gives meaning to and provides a pattern for the monastic life.

It will be argued below that Cassian draws on this understanding of psalmody when discussing the key to pure and ceaseless prayer. He also relies upon it when structuring the *Institutes* and *Conferences*, for they are to be read in much the same way. Cassian's monastic *corpus* provides a vehicle for exploring the depths of one's soul. Progress through the text offers therapy for a poor beginning in the monastic life and the opportunity both to correct one's habits and to calm the vices that disturb the soul. In the course of reading and embodying the text, the reader is to acquire a new disposition and restore the harmony of his soul. Free from disturbance and no longer attracted to material and ephemeral things, the monk's heart becomes a dwelling place of the Spirit who both inspires the monk and composes his prayers on his behalf.

By drawing on the practice of psalmody, Cassian reveals more about monastic life at Nitria and Kellia than any mere historical description could hope to achieve. His choice of an

autobiographical structure to represent Egyptian monastic teaching allows the reader to perceive both the manner in which the individual monk was formed and the content of monastic instruction. Rather than reading about monastic instruction, the reader is given the opportunity virtually to participate in it. Cassian's text does more than simply describe the monastic life. The act of reading the *Institutes* and *Conferences* is a pattern of this life.

NOTES

1. "pariterque ab eodem abbate aedificationis sermonem fusis lacrymis posceremus (quippe cuius hunc animi rigorem manifestissime noueramus, ut nisi fideliter desiderantibus, et cum omni cordis contritione quaerentibus, nequaquam acquiesceret januam perfectionis aperire, ne scilicet, si passim uel nolentibus eam, uel tepide sitientibus exhiberet, res necessarias, et quae solis perfectionem cupientibus debent esse compertae, indignis et fastidiose suscipientibus pandens, aut iactantiae uitium, aut prodicionis crimen uideretur incurrere), tandem fatigatus precibus nostris, ita exorsus est." *Con.* 1.1.

2. Guy, "Educational Innovation," 49, and Gould, *Desert Fathers*, 25-29.

3. While the ritual shows considerable variety early on, it had become almost formulaic by the time of the *Historia Lausiaca*. E.g., Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 32.

4. The elder was to use "his gift of spiritual discernment to adapt each of his prescriptions to the needs and capacities of his disciple." Guy, "Educational," 47.

5. Burton-Christie, *Word*, 157-160. That God inspires the *abbas* with words according to the zeal of the disciples, *Con.* 1.21.

6. Gould, *Desert Fathers*, 58-63.

7. “ipsos quodammodo suis institutis incorporatos et quod maius est Latino disputantes eloquio uobis exhibere.” *Conf.* 1-10, *praef.* 6.

8.

“ipsosque in cellulas suas auctores conlationum cum ipsis conlationum uoluminibus recipientes et cotidianis quodammodo cum eis interrogationibus ac responsionibus conloquentes.” *Con.* 18-24, *praef.* 3.

9. “Reading is an invitation to live temporarily within the thoughts of someone else.” Poulet, “Phenomenology,” 55.

10. *Con.* 1.20.4-5.

11. *Con.* 4.19.2.

12. *Con.* 7.23.2.

13. *Con.* 9.16.

14. Iser, *Act*, 155.

15. *Con.* 1.4.3.

16. *Con.* 2.10-11.

17. *Con.* 3.22.4.
18. *Con.* 4.2.
19. *Con.* 4.9.1.
20. *Cow.* 6.5.
21. *Con.* 7.3.1.
22. *Con.* 9.33.
23. *Con.* 10.8-9.
24. Rather than continuing on, the subsequent fourteen *Conferences* return to a period sometime before the companions learn the key to ceaseless prayer in *Conference* 10.
25. *Con.* 1.9; 10.6.2-3.
26. *Con.* 10.6.4.
27. *Con.* 1.1. See also *Con.* 2.1.
28. *Con.* 10.9.2-3.
29. *Apophthegmata* Pambo 9. For a more lengthy consideration of how the *abbas* regarded time, Fagerberg, "Time," 202.
30. On the inability of a reader to abandon entirely his own sense of self-awareness, Iser, *Prospecting*, 63-64.

31. Iser, *Act*, 34.

32. Iser, *Prospecting*, 64.

33. “festinet prius eorum propositum simili studio et conversatione suscipere, et tunc demum ea, quae supra facultatem hominis uidebantur, non solum possibilia, uerum etiam suauissima deprehendet.” *Con.* 1-10, *praef.* 7.

34. “praesertim cum harum rerum ratio nequaquam possit otiosa meditatione doctrinaque uerborum uel tradi uel intellegi uel memoria contineri. totum namque in sola experientia usuque consistit, et quemadmodum tradi nisi ab experto non queunt, ita ne percipi quidem uel intellegi nisi ab eo, qui ea pari studio ac sudore adprehendere elaborauerit, possunt: quae tamen si conlatione iugi spiritalium uirorum frequenter discussa non fuerint et polita, cito rursum mentis incuria dilabuntur.” *Inst.*, *praef.* 4-5.

35. “uelut rudi monasterio et in ueritate sitientibus.” *Inst.*, *praef.* 7. See also *Inst.* 2.2.

36. *Inst.* 4.9.

37.

Inst. 4.2. Cassian and Germanus had similarly abandoned their earlier formation, for they had been told to forget what they had learned in Palestine in order to embrace more fully the Egyptian ideal. *Con.* 18.3.1.

38. *Inst.* 1.1.2-5.

39. *Inst.* 1.3-9.

40. Cf. O. Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd. ed., 47-48, who argued that this last chapter has no place here.

41. *Inst.* 1.11.1-3.

42. *Inst.* 2.1.

43. *Inst.* 2.3.3-5. Cf. O. Chadwick, who argued that this digression is inappropriate *here*. *John Cassian*, 2nd. ed., 48.

44. *Inst.* 2.10.1.

45. *Inst.* 2.12.2.

46. *Inst.* 2.15-16; 3 *passim*.

47. *Inst.* 4.6.

48. *Inst.* 4.10.

49. “quam non solum operi manuum seu lectioni uel silentio et quieti cellae, uerum etiam cunctis uirtutibus ita praeferunt, ut huic iudicent omnia postponenda et uniuersa dispendia subire contenti sint, dummodo hoc bonum in nullo uiolasse uideantur.” *Inst.* 4.12.

50. *Inst.* 4.8,10.

51. *Inst.* 4.9.

52. *Inst.* 2.15.1.

53. *Inst.* 2.5.1-5; 4.10.

54. Cassian castigates abbots who introduce novelty or shy from the difficult regimen of the Egyptians. *Inst.* 2.3.3-5.

55. *Inst.*, *praef.* 4-5.

56. *Inst.* 4.30-31; also *Con.* 20.1.2-5.

57. Pinufius reiterated Cassian's earlier call for a single mentor. The system Pinufius described was not as structured, however, and the novice seems to have had some choice in his superior. *Inst.* 4.40-41.

58. *Inst.* 4.9.

59. *Inst.* 4.2.

60. *Inst.* 2.7.3; also *Inst.* 5.35.

61. *Inst.* 4.15-16.

62. *Inst.* 4.39.2-3. This list later travelled on its own and even appeared in a Greek version under Evagrius's name. De Vogüé, "Interpolation," 217-221, and "Morceau," 7-12.

63. O. Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd ed., 43, argues that this passage has no place in the *Institute* and that it would be more appropriate near the beginning of *Conference* 14. The argument is based on two premises: that the story has nothing to do with gluttony and that it is more appropriate for anchorites, and therefore belongs in the *Conferences*.

64.

“adprehenso discretionis examine proprio iam potens est stare iudicio atque ad arcem anachoreseos peruenire, minime debere ab uno quamuis summo uniuersa genera uirtutum expetere.” *Inst.* 5.4.1.

65. *Inst.* 5.13.

66. *Inst.* 5.9.

67. Chadwick described the anecdotes as “a collection of apophthegmata, or stories, not heaped together under any system whatever. There is no common theme.” (O. Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd ed., 43-44.) According to Chadwick, either the anecdotes were added later by copyists who wished to augment Cassian’s list of elders or the original exemplar had become disorganized and been badly reconstructed.

68. E.g., Guy, *Institutions*, 189, groups the stories thematically and interprets them as examples of spiritual, rather than bodily fasting. For an analysis of the intricate structure of *Institute* 5 as a whole, Pristas, “Theological Anthropology,” 34-44.

69. *Inst.* 5.24-26.

70. *Inst.* 5.27.

71. “numquam, ait, meam feci uoluntatem nec quemquam docui quod prius ipse non feci.” *Inst.* 5.28.

72. *Inst.* 5.29.

73. *Inst.* 5.30.1-3.

74. *Inst.* 5.31.

75. *Inst.* 5.32.1-3.

76. *Inst.* 5.33-35.

77. “prosilientes ad interpretandum eas, pro pinguetudine uel inmunditia sui cordis diuersa atque contraria uel fidei uel sibimet sentientes ueritatis lumen comprehendere nequiuerunt.” *Inst.* 5.34.

78. *Inst.* 5.36-38.

79. *Inst.* 5.40.1-2.

80. E.g., the account of Pinufius in *Con.* 20.1.

81. Cassian’s discussion of fornication immediately follows that of gluttony. It furthers the transition to independent judgment inaugurated by Antony’s speech, for here Cassian speaks of the need to confess all things to God rather than to an elder. *Inst.* 6.21.

82. “nec iudicium rectae discretionis adquirere nec honestae contemplationis intuitum nec maturitatem consilii possidere nec uitae participes nec iustitiae tenaces, sed ne spiritalis quidem ac ueri luminis capaces poterimus existere.” *Inst.* 8.1.1.

83. *Inst.* 8.22.

84. *Inst.* 7.7-10.

85. This is also evident in the subsequent *Institutes*.

86. *Inst.* 8.4.1.

87. “de ira dei uel furore cum legimus, non *anthropomorphos*, id est secundum humilitatem humanae perturbationis, sed digne deo, qui omni perturbatione alienus est, sentire debemus.” *Inst.* 8.4.3.

88. *Inst.* 8.4.1.

89. *Inst.* 8.9.

90. *Inst.* 8.10.

91. *Inst.* 8.10.

92.
Inst. 9.2-3.

93. *Inst.* 10.7.1-9. The use of Paul to link the struggle against the vices and the apostolic life was noted earlier. Now, the regulations of the apostolic Church are being interpreted as describing a monastic community.

94. *Inst.* 10.19.

95. *Inst.* 12.25.

96. *Inst.* 12.21-22.

97. *Inst.* 5.33.

98. See *Con.* 5.10.3-4.

99. *Inst.* 11.2; 12.2.

100. “ceterum nos, qui adhuc terrenis sumus passionibus inuoluti, nequaquam hoc modo temptare dignatur, sed crassiore et ut ita dixerim carnali elatione subplantat. et idcirco de hac quoque, qua máxime nos seu nostrae mensurae homines ac praecipue iuniorum uel incipientium mentes periclitant solent, necessarium reor secundum promissionem nostram pauca depromere.” *Inst.* 12.24.

101. *Inst.* 12.25.

102. *Inst.* 12.26.

103. “de exterioris namque sicut praediximus hominis motu status interioris agnoscitur. his igitur indiciis carnalis ista quam praefati sumus superbia declaratur.” *Inst.* 12.29.2.

104. *Inst.* 12.33.1.

105. *Inst.* 5.41.

106. *Inst.* 6.23.

107. E.g., *Inst.* 2.14.

108. E.g., *Inst.* 6.18-19; 10.20; 11.10.1-3.

109. Gould, *Desert*, 42-52.

110. *Con.* 7.15.1-2.

111. “Reading ... isolates the reader from the public domain of the spoken word, alienates the familiar and promotes a perception of solitude which breeds interpretation and self-reflection.” *Worthen, “Self,”* 15.

112. *Con. 1-10, praef.* 5.

113. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 9.

114. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 3.

115. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 8.

116. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 11.

117. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 30.

118. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 17.

119. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 32.

120. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 33.

121. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 30.

122. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 12.

123. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 14.

124. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 27-28.

125. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 29.

126. Athanasius, *Ep. ad Marc.* 13.

CHAPTER 5

Implications for *Praxis*

A Reconsideration of the Solitary Life

FRAMING THE QUESTION

Amid all the different views of the nature of monastic life current in southern Gaul in the early fifth century, there was at least one resounding theme: the polarity of solitary and communal life, or of *anachoresis* and the *vita coenobialis*. There was little doubt that each was a separate vocation and that each possessed its own perfection. Nevertheless, in the hierarchy of merits so vigorously championed by many Latin writers, life as a hermit was typically regarded as superior to life in a community. One might, or perhaps even should, begin monastic life in the company of others, but the perfection of such a life lay in complete withdrawal from human interaction. Only in isolation could one worship God without distraction and pray without ceasing.

At first glance, Cassian's monastic literature would seem to reinforce this polarity. In a manner that accorded much more with his Gallic readers than with the reality of Egyptian monasticism, Cassian frequently divides the monastic vocation between the practical and the contemplative, or between the communal and the solitary lives. He also writes that *anachoresis* ought to succeed communal life as part of a natural progression. In the voice of Antony, for example, Cassian describes *anachoresis* as leading to a more sublime perfection than is available to those living within a community.¹ He introduces Paphnutius as one who mastered cenobitic discipline at a young age and who in his later years sought greater purity by penetrating far into the desert.² Cassian even portrays his own monastic journey as an evolution from the cloister to the desert.

A closer reading of Cassian's monastic *corpus*, however, reveals that the dichotomy he proposes between the cenobitic and anchoritic lives is not as straightforward as it first appears. Cassian does not offer an unqualified praise of the solitary life. Nor does he recommend evolution from one vocation to the other without reservation. In fact, *anachoresis* very often presents more dangers than rewards and there are more impure than pure motives for withdrawing from the community. Rather than leading to the kingdom of God on earth, Cassian describes his decision to leave the monastic community at Diolcos in order to become a hermit as a mistake that placed his very soul in jeopardy.³

One must therefore ask why Cassian offers such divergent views of *anachoresis* and whether it is possible to discern his own voice among the different opinions being expressed. In his watershed essay, Julien Leroy has attempted to answer this question by paying careful attention to the identity of the speakers and the context of each *Conference*. Like the other anchorites who speak in the *Conferences*, Antony and Paphnutius reserve the highest praise for their own vocation. Conversely, the cenobites who speak in the *Conferences* do not regard communal life as a training ground for more stringent renunciations to come. It is a lifelong commitment in its own right.⁴ Given the different perspectives of Cassian's interlocutors, Leroy concludes that they cannot be said to represent Cassian's own view on the matter. This, according to Leroy, is found in the voice of Germanus. By closely examining the ideas expressed by Germanus throughout the *Conferences* and arguing that these represent Cassian's own position, Leroy concludes that Cassian believed *anachoresis* to be the superior mode of life.⁵ In other

words, Cassian sides with Antony, Paphnutius and his readers in Gaul.

Leroy's analysis is astute and his perception of different voices within Cassian's text marks a turning point in the study of Cassian's theology. His argument, however, does not take into account the fact that Germanus is not a static figure in Cassian's text. Germanus evolves in the course of the *Conferences* from a novice almost wholly ignorant of the monastic vocation to a mature monk capable of pure and unceasing prayer. If one should argue that Germanus is representative of Cassian's views, then one must ask which Germanus: the novice at Diolcos or the mature monk at Isaac's feet? Moreover, it was argued above that Cassian encouraged his reader to adopt Germanus' voice as his own by representing to the reader some of his own pre-suppositions. This might go far toward explaining why Cassian's description of two rigid and distinct monastic vocations has more to do with Gallic expectations than with Egyptian reality. It complicates Leroy's thesis, however, for Germanus' words might sometimes be better analyzed as a source for Cassian's intended audience or as an attempt to structure the response of his reader than as a source for Cassian's own views.

Leroy's argument also falls short in his acceptance without question that *anachoresis* is to be equated with physical withdrawal from the community. This prohibits him from adequately addressing the foundation of Cassian's theology. The dichotomy that Cassian proposes between cenobitic life and *anachoresis* is not rooted in a rigid distinction between the communal and the solitary. Instead, Cassian proposes a fundamental distinction between the outer and inner person.

The first acts of renunciation, the inculcation of monastic discipline, and the first stages of spiritual combat concern the outer person. The attainment of purity of heart, the undertaking of a more advanced contemplation, and pure and unceasing prayer pertain to the inner person. While Cassian describes these stages as concerning cenobitism and *anachoresis* respectively, the distinction between the two cannot simply be identified with the distinction between life in a community and life as a hermit. To understand better Cassian's distinction between cenobitic and anchoritic, or between our exterior and interior lives, we must ask three questions: how does Cassian describe *anachoresis* in the *Institutes*; how does he compare cenobitism and *anachoresis* when he again takes up the topic in *Conferences* 18 and 19; and what does he mean by solitude?

ANACHORESIS IN THE INSTITUTES

Cassian begins his discussion of spiritual warfare in the fifth *Institute* by describing Germanus as an immature monk who regarded *anachoresis* as the most profound expression of love for God. In his immaturity the youthful Germanus differed little from the reader of the *Institutes*. Each was convinced of the superiority of *anachoresis* by the reputation of the Egyptian monks, the common opinion of the brethren, and his own ardent desire. Neither Germanus nor the reader were familiar with Egyptian monastic life or the harsh demands of the life alone in the desert. They were unfamiliar with even the names of all the vices, let alone prepared to combat them. Like the reader, and most unlike those whom he hoped to imitate, Germanus was still an “unformed anchorite” (*rudis anachoreta*:), impelled more by youthful eagerness than by spiritual knowledge.⁶

Germanus’ immaturity stands in stark contrast to the hermits whose manner of life had lured him from the *coenohium* at Diolcos. The regime of these hermits was harsh. The soil of the island was infertile, drinking water extremely scarce, and the labors of the monks astonishing in their severity.⁷ Life on the island offered all the isolation and physical discomfort of the greatest of the Egyptian hermitages. The sanctity of hermits who had endured such hardship could not be in doubt. While Germanus had resided at Diolcos only a short time, and Cassian’s reader had only recently concluded the novitiate of the first four *Institutes*, the hermits had lived for a very long time (*diutissime*) in the monastery before withdrawing to the desert.⁸ Germanus had embarked on the anchoritic life while still ignorant of all but the most elementary afflictions of the

soul, and the reader is only beginning to learn of the vices and how to combat them. The hermits, on the other hand, had undertaken the solitary life only after they had diligently learned the rule of discretion (*regula discretionis*) and been purified of all vices.⁹ The praiseworthy lives of the hermits highlight Germanus' inability to practice even the most fundamental monastic discipline.¹⁰ The contrast provides ample evidence that one should leave the community only when all the vices have been conquered, not when one has only learned of the first.

Cassian continues to play upon his reader's zeal for withdrawal and solitude throughout the *Institutes*. By casting the vices in terms that would suggest withdrawal from the *coenohium* as a viable cure, Cassian agrees with the bulk of Latin monastic literature and the popular view of solitude that it had helped to form. In the end, however, Cassian manages to leave his reader's expectations unfulfilled. Against the eagerness for the anchoritic life that prevailed, he consistently argues that disturbances of the soul can best be quelled in the company of others.¹¹ Isolation only exacerbates vices. Rather than being a cure, *anachoresis* almost inevitably worsens a monk's affliction.

Cassian eloquently describes the need for the protection of the *coenohium* in his discussion of covetousness. Resulting from an inadequate foundation and a lukewarm love of God, the affliction will eventually drive the monk from the company of his brethren. If unchecked, it will harden his heart and chase away all virtue, to the point that even in Hell he will remain unrepentant.¹² If true poverty is the goal,

we [Cassian and his reader] should seek out both the discipline and the institution of a monastery, so that we may in truth renounce this world, saving for ourselves nothing of those things we despised because of being held back by infidelity, but we should seek our daily food not from hoarded money, but from our own work.¹³

Obsession with money and fear of poverty will drive the monk from the security of the monastery in search of a very elusive wealth in the world. However, the failed monk will never be able to acquire wealth sufficient to dispel his fear or sate his thirst for more.¹⁴

Cassian also takes up the need for community in his discussion of anger. He admits that human interaction can cause irritation and strife among the brethren, and that this may in turn lead to anger. This does not mean, however, that we can blame external circumstances for our anger.

And while we turn the causes of our error onto others, we will never be able to arrive at the goal of patience and perfection. Therefore the greatest part of our correction and peace must not be laid on the will of another, which is never in our power, but rather it lies in our own authority.¹⁵

Anger arises from within. Like a dangerous beast in its lair, it cannot be called harmless merely because it has no opportunity to strike. Alone in the desert a monk will still experience wrath, either at visitors, at memories of past wrongs, or even at inanimate objects.¹⁶ Such anger will inhibit pure prayer and obviate the true vocation of the anchorite.¹⁷

A monk should undertake the ascetic life for the sake of divine contemplation and with a desire for more profound insight, not as a cowardly flight.¹⁸ An ill-considered retreat into the desert will cause more harm than good. Whatever vices a monk carries uncured into the desert will remain hidden within him. The desert will not cleanse him of sin.¹⁹ On the other hand, interaction with others can indicate a propensity to anger and their correction can help us to root out the vices. If we are pure of heart, our companions can do nothing to incite our wrath.

In his discussion of covetousness Cassian warns against flight from the monastery to return to the world. When treating of anger, however, he cautions against flight from the monastery into the desert. The reason for this change of emphasis lies in the progress of the reader. Cassian groups covetousness with gluttony and fornication to make up the first set of vices. Straddling fornication and anger, it is a Janus, looking both forward and back. Though of external rather than of carnal origin, it affects the lowest part of the soul. Anger, on the other hand, together with dejection and *acedia*, affect the irascible part of the soul. They therefore concern a new level of spiritual warfare and Cassian's discussion of them addresses the reader at a new stage of his spiritual life.²⁰ Having quelled the vices that disturb the lowest part of the soul, the reader is no longer likely to return to the world. Instead, the danger has become an impatience with his fellow monks that might induce him to leave the monastery for the desert.

When speaking of dejection, Cassian uses even stronger terms to warn against any untimely flight into the desert.

And so God, the creator of all things, recognizing before all else the care for his work, and because the roots and causes of our offenses lie not in others but in ourselves, commanded that we should not abandon intercourse with our brethren, nor avoid those whom we think we have injured or by whom we have been offended, but he [God] orders that they be mollified, knowing that the perfection of the heart is to be sought not so much by separation from men as by the virtue of patience.²¹

This is no longer the advice of Cassian or even the doctrine of the Egyptian *abbas*. It is a divine command rooted in the fundamental order of creation. The argument is simple. If we are not perfect, we will never be at peace, either among people or separated from them. On the other hand, if we are free from vices, we will be at peace not only with other people, but even with wild and brutal animals (*iferis ac beluis*).²² Either the monk is not ready to leave the monastery or there is no longer any reason to leave.

Cassian strengthens this argument in the following *Institute*, where he describes *acedia* as being especially dangerous to hermits. Like anger and dejection, *acedia* produces a contempt for communal life and urges the monk to regard his companions as the source of his spiritual stupor.²³ As the soul is gradually worn out, the monk will seek what appear to be remedies, but which in fact cause further harm. Eventually, he will leave the community to begin life as a solitary. Far from being a cure, this will invite a redoubled attack. *Acedia* will not permit the monk to remain in his cell, and will lead him to become entangled in secular affairs, “so that finally, as though bound by the coils of a serpent, he will never be able to free himself to return to the perfection of his first

profession.”²⁴ A monk should neither fall prey to the slumber of *acedia* nor leave the walls of the monastery.²⁵ He should instead remain in his cell, work with his hands, and pray without ceasing.²⁶

The further the reader progresses in virtue and comes to regard *anachoresis* as an attainable goal, the more strenuously Cassian undermines its foundation.

Vainglory is like a phoenix that arises from its ashes when conquered, for it can occur only when some degree of virtue has been acquired. It also requires an audience, for one cannot become vain without the approval and acclamation of others. While this might suggest flight from others as a viable cure, Cassian repeats his claim that no vice can be purged that penetrates the desert along with the one fleeing.²⁷ “In solitude also it [vainglory] does not cease from pursuing the fugitive from intercourse with all mortals for the sake of glory, and the more fully he has shunned the entire world, so the more vehemently it pursues him.”²⁸ Monastic hagiography gives ample witness to the fact that withdrawal does not always entail disappearance from the popular imagination. Alone in his cell the saint might wield more influence than if he had remained among people.²⁹ Such influence could be real, as Cassian’s account of John of Lycopolis suggests.³⁰ It could also be illusory, as Cassian notes in his story of a hermit who preached to imaginary multitudes in his cell.³¹

Like vainglory, pride also induces a monk to seek solitude precipitously. Once pride has taken hold of the monk and he has fallen from virtue,

he shudders at the discipline of the coenobium and, as if he were held back from perfection by intercourse with the

brethren and were called from the good of patience and humility by the vice and impediment of others, he desires life in a solitary cell.³²

The desire for the desert is again prompted by a disturbance of the soul rather than purity of heart. The immature monk who seeks to be isolated from all others will deprive himself of the instruction necessary for the monastic life. He will also lose the opportunity to cultivate the supreme virtues of humility and simplicity of heart, “without which neither piety before God, nor the purgation of the vices, nor the correction of habits, nor the consummation of virtue can be attained.”³³ Humility cannot be found in the desert; instead, it lies in conversation with the brethren.

Cassian also warns that pride can lead a monk to think that he can earn his own salvation through extreme asceticism. While it is impossible to encapsulate in a brief summary Cassian’s overall view on the relationship between grace and works, he states here that no human deed can of itself merit salvation.³⁴ The kingdom of God cannot be earned through suffering in the desert. Purity of heart and perfect charity are gifts from God and no human effort will suffice to attain them. Therefore, the monk should behave as though he were the least of his group. To resist pride he should be eager for “fasts, vigils, prayers and contrition of heart.”³⁵ He should obey his superior’s commands as though they were from God Himself. As the least in his community, he should endure every insult, for no pain can compare to the passion of the Lord. Finally, he should remember that he can do nothing, not even practice a monastic regimen, without the succor and grace of God.³⁶

As the reader progresses through the text and matures in his vocation, Cassian argues more and more firmly against withdrawal from the community. Entering the desert before *all* of the vices have been conquered can only result in disaster.³⁷ One could argue, however, that this still does not preclude the possibility that Cassian may have favored the solitary life. At no point in the *Institutes* does he deny that the solitary life is a valid vocation. He merely argues that it invites special dangers and that there are many more impure than pure motives for seeking it. If the *Institutes* are addressed only to the cenobite, it would not be surprising to find in them that Cassian discourages the solitary life. This would agree with the survey of the *Institutes* made in [Chapter 4](#). If Cassian had intended a reciprocal relationship between the ascent of the reader and progress through the text, then it would be reasonable for him to discourage retreat to the desert until all of the vices had been explained and conquered. It would also conform to Leroy's thesis, which suggests that the first four *Institutes* are intended for cenobites and that the last eight are at best ambiguous about their intended audience. In short, the arguments made above would not be contradicted, Leroy's thesis would be satisfied, and the *Conferences* would still be addressed to the solitary.

Such a view, however, would fail to take into account some important clues that Cassian provides to the reader to measure his progress. One of these lies in his treatment of vainglory and pride, which he divides into two kinds. The more advanced manifestations of these vices do not pertain directly to the reader. Instead, he is subject to the attack of their more base and carnal forms.³⁸ Consequently, the relationship between the development of the reader and progress through the text at least partly breaks down in these last two *Institutes*.

The reader has progressed only to where he might understand, but not experience, the vices' more sophisticated attacks, and therefore has not gained the purity of heart necessary for solitude. Another clue lies in the ascent of the reader through the first ten *Conferences*. At the beginning of the *Conferences* Germanus aspires to the kingdom of God, but has no idea how this might be achieved. Ignorant of the immediate aim of purity of heart, he has no hope of standing in the presence of God without the continued advice and supervision of elders within the community. Yet one more clue appears in *Conference* 10, which marks the end of the ascent of the reader to the heights of pure prayer. Germanus complains that Isaac, the interlocutor of *Conferences* 9 and 10, has not fairly answered Germanus' earlier question about how to pray ceaselessly. Isaac responds that the subtlety of Germanus' questions reveal that he is finally approaching the discernment of an *abba* and is therefore worthy to learn this most holy mystery.³⁹

The ascent of the reader through the text therefore does not cease with the conclusion of *Institute* 12. It continues until he has gained the zenith of the monastic life, which is pure and unceasing prayer. Only in *Conference* 10, the culmination of Cassian's monastic instruction, is the reader assumed to have attained the purity of heart that is necessary for taking up the life of the anchorite. The reader of the first nine *Conferences*, like the reader of the *Institutes*, does not possess the purity of heart that *anachoresis* requires.

PIAMUN AND JOHN ON THE SOLITARY LIFE

The *Institutes* and the first ten *Conferences* describe the monastic life from the donning of the monastic habit to the attainment of pure and ceaseless prayer. In as much as ceaseless prayer is the goal of the monastic life, these works comprise a complete and coherent *corpus*.⁴⁰ Cassian goes on, however, to compose fourteen more *Conferences*. In these latter works he clarifies issues raised in his original *corpus* and sometimes offers a different perspective entirely. Just as these later *Conferences* return to earlier issues, they also return to a time prior to Germanus' conversations with Isaac (*Conferences* 9 and 10). *Conferences* 11-24 do not continue Germanus' journey through Egypt. They instead return to a period very early in his travels. The last set of *Conferences*, which take place near Diolcos, return the reader to the very beginning of Cassian's journey.⁴¹

This is significant, for while the latter *Conferences* may not accurately represent Cassian's Egyptian itinerary, they provide strong indications as to how they were to be read.⁴² The Germanus of the latter *Conferences* is not the monk who sat at Isaac's feet. He is younger, and he resembles more the *rudis ana-choreta* mentioned in *Institute* 5 than the discerning monk of *Conferences* 9 and 10.⁴³ Cassian did not believe that his readers had fully grasped his monastic teaching.⁴⁴ He was nevertheless unwilling to abandon his method of instruction, and chose instead to revisit an earlier stage of his reader's formation.⁴⁵ The final fourteen *Conferences* must therefore be read with care. While they are not part of his original description of the prayerful ascent of the soul, they nevertheless shed light on what Cassian meant by this ascent.

Cassian used these hermits to take up once again the relationship between *anachoresis* and cenobitism. The tenor of Cassian's works suggests that there was a pressing need. *Conference* 18 describes the goals and virtues of the different kinds of monastic life. In a manner similar to that of Jerome, Cassian divides the monastic life between two valid vocations: cenobitism and *anachoresis*.⁴⁶ The cenobites, Cassian claims, arose from the apostolic community in Jerusalem.⁴⁷ As the first Christians began to accommodate gentile converts by relaxing the requirements of the Law, the community as a whole became lukewarm in its commitment. Those who were still dedicated to sharing everything in common and to living according to the precepts of their elders soon separated from these tepid Christians and lived apart. Renunciation of worldly goods and obedience to tradition have been the foundation of the cenobitic life ever since.⁴⁸ The anchorites are the flowers and fruit of the cenobites who later left the community not from the "disease of impatience" but from the "desire for a loftier progress and divine contemplation."⁴⁹

Cassian also describes two other kinds of monastic life which he holds to be abominations. The first of these he terms Sarabaites. Descended from Ananias and Sapphira, these monks have no respect for the authority of the fathers. They possess no discipline, are not subject to an elder, and remain their own masters. While they call themselves cenobites, the Sarabaites stand as a hollow mockery of the true tradition of the fathers. They do not surrender their worldly goods, possess no stability and live an unsupervised life.⁵⁰

The second kind of false monk stands as a mockery of true anchorites. These monks rejected the *coenobium* in favor of living alone, but their desire for solitude is borne from an impatience with the brethren rather than from a genuine desire for union with God. Their fervor is consequently short-lived and they are easily trapped by the snares that endanger even the most seasoned hermits. Like the Sarabaites, these monks begin badly and quickly become worse. At no time do they come close to the purity necessary for the solitary life. Untrained and undisciplined, their ardor fades quickly into the lukewarmness that is most hated by God.⁵¹

Cassian's description of monastic life resembles Jerome's in that he describes cenobitism and *anachoresis* as the only valid vocations. It also resembles Jerome's in that the corrupt forms of monastic life have more to do with circumstances in Gaul than with what Cassian saw in Egypt.⁵² As mentioned above, there were not two separate and easily identifiable vocations in Egypt. There was rather a wide variety of monastic practices which included both urban monks and worldly cenobites. These monks cannot be dismissed as Sarabaites any more than as Remnuoth.⁵³ Instead, Cassian was much more concerned with berating his readers in Gaul.⁵⁴

Cassian's principal complaint about the Sarabaites is their failure to follow the traditions of the fathers. He frequently makes the same complaint about Gallic monks. Early in the *Institutes* Cassian bemoans abbots who, either from ignorance or pride, have introduced traditions contrary to those of the fathers.⁵⁵ Just as it was necessary for Germanus to forget what he had learned in Syria and adopt the institutes of the Egyptians, so also the reader needs to abandon the corrupt

practices he had learned in Gaul.⁵⁶ Cassian's condemnation of the Sarabaites reinforces his oft-repeated call for a cenobitic discipline founded on humility and on obedience to the tradition of the Egyptian *abbas*.

The false anchorites also look back to a familiar theme. The *Institutes* frequently warn against leaving the community because of anger, impatience or pride. Cassian again warns that a monk cannot be free from temptation so long as he hopes for protection from the desert and the doors of his cell. He moreover condemns the impatient monk by likening him to a wild beast who is not at peace unless removed to a cave or an isolated cell. This warning is brought home in *Conference* 19, where Cassian again examines what he describes as the two legitimate forms of monastic life. Using the first person plural to include his Gallic audience, Cassian writes that "we cannot stand the discipline of the *coenobium*, I will not say until old age, but for scarcely two years are content to endure the yoke of submission."⁵⁷

In contrast to this fickleness, Cassian offers the reader an *abba* who has gained vast experience both as a cenobite and as a hermit. John lived in a *coenobium* for thirty years before setting out on his own. After twenty years as a hermit he returned to his erstwhile community. John was successful at both

vocations. As a cenobite he excelled all the saints in humility and as a hermit he transcended his bodily condition to achieve the heights of pure prayer.⁵⁸ His "mind was so filled with divine meditations and spiritual contemplations" that at times he lost all awareness of his body and its needs.⁵⁹ As a hermit, however, John was unable to escape carnal concerns.⁶⁰ In a manner similar to the decline of the apostolic community in

Jerusalem, the desire of the first anchorites to welcome others had led to their decline. Despite the heights of prayer that he reached as a hermit, John's concern to provide both for his own and for his guest's needs caused the fire of his contemplation to grow cold.⁶¹ He therefore rejected his hermitage and its many concerns and returned to the *coenobium*. There he found both freedom from distraction and safety from the assaults of vainglory and pride.⁶²

John's decision is completely at odds with the expectations of Cassian's audience, for it overturns the popular equation of solitude with freedom from worldly care. Instead, Cassian's reader is confronted with a venerable *abba* who argues that such freedom can be found only within the confines of the *coenobium*. Paradoxically, it is among the brethren that one finds the conditions necessary for solitude. Robert Markus has recently noted this juxtaposition and argued that "in the course of these two *Conferences* (XVIII and XIX) Cassian has come to abandon, subtly but decisively, the equation of the communal with the practical and the solitary with the contemplative life."⁶³ This is a valid assessment of Cassian's argument, for in these *Conferences* Cassian emphasizes how the world impinges upon the hermitage and how the *coenobium* provides freedom from distraction. This emphasis, however, is not new to Cassian's last set of *Conferences*. It is instead a theme that recurs throughout his monastic literature.

Cassian's demand that the discipline of the *coenobium* be mastered before aspiring to the desert leaves such an aspiration practically out of reach.⁶⁴ It also introduces a circular argument that virtually ensures that the desert is an unattainable goal. John firmly states that if it were not for a very few exceptions he would deny the very possibility of

perfection in both vocations.⁶⁵ At another point he argues that a vocation should not be pursued if its goals cannot be perfectly achieved.⁶⁶ These two statements, taken together, effectively disallow a solitary life. Cenobitic perfection is nearly impossible. If one achieves this and aspires to the solitary life, he is virtually assured of failing in the latter. One should therefore remain in the *coenobium*. This is not the first time that Cassian raises such an argument. In the previous *Conference*, he argued that with true patience and tranquility, “there will be no need either of the support of the cell or of the refuge of solitude.”⁶⁷ In *Institute* 9 he claimed that impatience is not a valid reason to leave the monastery and that perfect patience eliminates any need to leave.⁶⁸

ANACHORESIS AS INTERIORITY

This paradox forces us to reconsider the traditional equation of cenobitism with *praxis* and *anachoresis* with *theoria*. If we should accept that Cassian questions the very possibility of the solitary life, then we must deny that he equates solitary and contemplative. Otherwise, we would be forced to conclude that Cassian put contemplation out of the reach of the monk. We must therefore take up John's challenge to Germanus to decide whether he had been induced to return to the *coenobium* "by an aversion to or by a desire for that purity of the solitary [life]." ⁶⁹ Cassian's praise of John would argue against the former. If we accept the latter, however, then we must discover how *anachoresis* might in fact be located in the heart of the *coenobium*.

According to John, "the goal of the cenobite is to mortify and crucify all his desires and, according to the salutary command of evangelical perfection, to think nothing of tomorrow." ⁷⁰ On the other hand, "the perfection of the hermit is to have a mind freed from all earthly things and in this way to unite it, as far as human weakness is able, with Christ." ⁷¹ These descriptions reflect a view common in Gaul at the time: the former vocation emphasizes discipline, while the latter speaks more of contemplation. Communal life provides the discipline that makes *anachoresis* possible. To pray truly, however, one must cast aside the community and seek the solitude of the desert.

The argument that discipline must precede prayer is valid, in as much as one cannot pray truly unless one is free from sin and distracting thoughts. This does not mean, however, that

Cassian regards discipline and prayer as successive dimensions of the spiritual life. Instead, discipline and prayer support one another in a spiraling relationship that ascends toward union with God. Cassian articulates this relationship when he introduces pure prayer in *Conference 9*.⁷²

The aim of every monk and the perfection of his heart tends toward continual and unbroken perseverance in prayer and, as far as is allowed to human frailty, strives toward an immovable tranquility and perpetual purity of the mind, for the sake of which we seek unweariedly and practice constantly every labor of the body as well as contrition of the spirit. And there is between one and the other a kind of reciprocal and inseparable union.⁷³

This reciprocal union between *praxis* and *theoria* belies the notion that one must first master discipline within a community and then leave the *coenobium* for a life dedicated to prayer. Instead, clearer sight in prayer is directly associated with greater purity.⁷⁴ They are two aspects of a unified ascent to God. Progress in contemplation does not await the purification of the soul. Nor does it await the abandonment of the *coenobium*.

John provides the reason for this in his description of the solitary life, for he offers an important *caveat*, we may be united with Christ in contemplation only as far as human weakness permits. Our carnal state prohibits union with God. Cassian also takes up this theme in other *Conferences*. We may contemplate the image of Christ's glory.⁷⁵ We may cling (*inhaerere*) to God.⁷⁶ We may even tend (*tendere*) toward unbroken and ceaseless prayer.⁷⁷ We will not attain

perfection, however, so long as we are clothed in carnal bodies. We cannot return to the pure contemplation of God that we possessed before our fall.⁷⁸ The proper goal of the monk is therefore to obtain the kingdom of Heaven as far as our human frailty will allow.⁷⁹ In this way we will gain a foretaste of our salvation and we will obey the natural yearning of our soul to be restored to its original condition.⁸⁰

In the voice of John, Cassian boldly states what would have been shocking to his Gallic reader: that *anachoresis* requires the *coenobium*. Contemplation is a continuous effort toward union with God that cannot be fully attained.⁸¹ The mind must be disciplined in order to preserve its purity, but this purity will inevitably be diminished by the need to attend to earthly concerns. Contemplation therefore requires continuous *praxis* in which the mind is freed from disturbance. It is in the *coenobium* that one finds the conditions necessary for such contemplation. The mutual support of other monks provides freedom from care. Their presence assists in the detection and purgation of vices. Cenobitic discipline, rooted in humility and obedience, leads to purity of heart. Contemplation is not possible without the purity gained in the *coenobium* and, at least in the case of John, cannot be sustained outside it.

It might nevertheless be argued that the *coenobium* fails to provide the one ingredient absolutely necessary for sustained contemplation: solitude. Cassian claims, however, that solitude is an integral part of communal life. In his *Institutes* he recommends the quiet of the cell even for novices.⁸² The daily routine set out for the novice in *Institutes* 1-4 allows for human interaction only during meals and the hours of prayer.⁸³ Praying alone in one's cell is frequently

recommended. Cassian also describes supposedly “anchoretic” disciplines, such as fasts and vigils, as part of communal life. Ceaseless prayer, which is the goal of the anchorite, is part of the practical discipline of the *coenobium*. In his first set of *Institutes*, Cassian juxtaposes continuous work and unceasing meditation in the cell.⁸⁴ When describing dejection, he recommends both remaining within the community and praying without ceasing.⁸⁵

The cenobitic life does not ignore prayer; nor does it address only the lower levels of prayer and the routine of the divine office. The highest levels of prayer may be experienced by all monks. While those more advanced in the ascetic life are more likely to enjoy this experience, it is available even to novices.⁸⁶ Conversely the *Conferences*, which Leroy argued are directed toward hermits, often speak of the need for community.⁸⁷ *Conference 2*, for example, reminds the reader of the need for continued supervision. *Conference 5* explains how interaction with brethren can aid the purification of the soul. The solitude of the cell is to be sought by all, and it is to be sought within the *coenobium*.⁸⁸ It is this fact that leads Cassian to admonish even his most advanced reader to pray silently, so that he might not disturb those who are nearby with mutterings or shouts (*susurris uel clamoribus*)⁸⁹

For Cassian, *anachoresis* is not a retreat into the desert but rather a withdrawal into one’s true and inner self.⁹⁰ The *locus* of solitude is not a hermit’s cell. It is instead the inner life of a soul undisturbed by outward concerns. The cenobitic and anchoretic lives serve as metaphors for the relationship between the outer and the inner life. In order to use these metaphors with any success, however, it was necessary for Cassian first to undermine what the metaphors had become: a

belief that there were two separate monastic vocations, each having its own perfection but unequal in merit. To accomplish this, Cassian repeatedly questioned the motives of those who dreamed of physical withdrawal. When this proved insufficient, he argued that, except for a few nearly miraculous exceptions, the eremitical life is an unattainable goal.

NOTES

1. *Inst.* 5.4.1. Also *Inst.* 2.9.1-3.; *Con.* 1, *praef.* 4.
2. *Con.* 3.1.3.
3. Esp. *Con.* 19.11.
4. Leroy, “Le cénobitisme,” 121-158.
5. Leroy, “Le cénobitisme,” 149-156.
6. *Inst.* 5.36.1.
7. *Inst.* 5.36.2.
8. Cassian’s description of Diolcos occurs in *Institute* 5, which marks a transition from the novitiate described in *Institutes* 1-4 and the beginning of life within the community.
9. *Inst.* 5.36.1.
10. For example, Germanus was unable to stay awake during vigils. *Inst.* 5.35.

11. Fornication is an exception to this. *Inst.* 6.3. The problem is that human interaction prompts the intrusion of unwanted images that disturb the mind during prayer. This interaction could be limited within the community, however, and solitude did not necessitate the abandonment of the *coenobium* itself. Cassian had earlier recommended the quiet of the cell even for novices and recommended a regimen that limited human contact. *Inst.* 2.15.1-2.

12. *Inst.* 7.7-11.

13. “monasterii disciplinam institutionemque pariter expetamus, ut in ueritate renuntiemus huic mundo, nihil ex his quae contempsimus infidelitate nos retrahente seruantes, cotidianum uictum non recondita pecunia, sed opere proprio conquiramus.” *Inst.* 7.18.

14. *Inst.* 7.11.

15. “dumque in alios erroris nostri uergimus causas, numquam ad patientiae ac perfectionis calcem ualebimus peruenire. Summa igitur emendationis ac tranquillitatis nostrae non est in alterius arbitrio conlocanda, quod nequaquam nostrae subiacet potestati, sed in nostra potius ditione consistât.” *Inst.* 8.16-17.

16. *Inst.* 8.19.1-3.

17. *Inst.* 8.13.

18.

Inst. 8.18.

19. *Inst.* 8.18.

20. For *Institute* 8 introducing a new frame of reference, Chapter 4.

21. “ideoque creator omnium deus, opificii sui curationem prae omnibus noscens, et quia non in aliis, sed in nobismet ipsis offensionum radices causaeque consistèrent, non deserenda praecepit fratrum consortia, nec uitari eos, quos laesos a nobis uel a quibus nos arbitramur offensos, sed deliniri iubet, sciens perfectionem cordis non tam separatione hominum quam patientiae uirtute conquiri.” *Inst.* 9.7.

22. *Inst.* 9.8.

23. *Inst.* 10.2.1-4.

24. “ut tamquam serpentinis spiris obstrictus numquam deinceps ad perfectionem professionis antiquae se ualeat enodare.” *Inst.* 10.6.

25. *Inst.* 10.5.

26. *Inst.* 10.7.1-6.

27. *Inst.* 11.8.

28. “In solitudine quoque cunctorum mortalium consortia gloriae causa fugientem persequi non desistit, quantoque amplius uniuersum quis uitauerit mundum, tanto eum acrius insectatur.” *Inst.* 11.6.

29. Note, for example, the spread of Antony's fame despite (or perhaps because of) his retreat into the desert. Athanasius, *Vita s. Antonii*, 93.

30. That Theodosius I consulted John before engaging the usurper Eugenius in battle, *Inst.* 4.23.

31. *Inst.* 11.16.

32. "ipsam disciplinam coenobii perhorrescit, ac ueluti qui fratrum consortio de perfectione retrahatur ac de bono patientiae atque humilitatis aliorum uitio et impedimento reuocetur, habitationem solitariae cellae desiderat." *Inst.* 12.30.

33. "sine qua nec pietas in deum nec uitiorum purgatio nec emendatio morum nec uirtutum consummatio poterit adprehendi." *Inst.* 12.19. See also *Inst.* 12.23.

34. *Inst.* 12.16. For a list of studies on Cassian's views on grace, Stewart, *Cassian*, 186, n.128.

35. *Inst.* 12.16. Note that these were all possible within the community.

36. *Inst.* 12.33.2.

37. Cassian later revealed that he had left the community too early. This caused him to fear that he would never be free from sin. *Con.* 9.1ff

38. *Inst.* 12.24-26.

39. *Con.* 10.9.

40. For the divisions of Cassian's *corpus*, Leroy, "Les Prefaces," 157-180, and Stewart, "Scripture and Contemplation," 457-461.

41. The interlocutors of these *Conferences* are the celebrated hermits mentioned in *Inst.* 5.36.

42. For example, *Con.* 1-10, *praef* 6 18-24, *praef* 3.

43. Later, Cassian and Germanus are described as still being ignorant of the nature of the ascetic life. *Con.* 20.4.

44.

That his method of reading was not grasped is evident from the speed with which his work was excerpted and epitomized, thereby rendering the dialogues useless. For example, de Vogue, "Une interpolation," 217-221, and "Un morceau," 7-12.

45. That Cassian still encouraged his reader to participate actively in the *Conferences*, see *Con.* 18-24, *praef* 3.

46. *Con.* 18.4.2. Jerome, *Ep.* 22.34.

47. *Con.* 18.5. This is Cassian's second history of monasticism. In the first he traced the tradition to Mark's converts in Alexandria. *Inst.* 2.5. For the implications of these histories, de Vogue, "Monachisme," 213-240.

48. *Con.* 18.5.1-4.

49. “inpatientiae morbo” and “desiderio sublimioris profectus contemplationisque diuinae.” *Con.* 18.6.1.

50. *Con.* 18.7.2-3.

51. *Con.* 18.8.1-2.

52. Jerome criticized the Remnuoth for their fascination with external display. Only a few paragraphs before he had ridiculed “false monks” living in Rome for the same thing. *Ep.* 22.28,34.

53. Goehring, “Encroaching,” 281-296.

54. Cassian’s two legitimate forms of monastic life also have more to do with Gaul than with Egypt. While he here seems to confirm his reader’s expectations, in the following *Conference* Cassian will overturn them.

55. *Inst.* 2.3.3-5.

56. *Con.* 18.3.1.

57. “non dicam usque ad senectam in coenobii permanere non possumus disciplina, sed uix biennio subiectionis iugum sustinere contend.” *Con.* 19.2.1.

58. For his humility, *Con.* 19.2.1.

59. “ita diuinis meditationibus ac spiritalibus theoriis animus replebatur.” *Con.* 19.4.1.

60. *Con.* 19.3.2.

61. *Con.* 19.5.2.
62. *Con.* 19.6.1.
63. Markus, *End*, 181-182.
64. Cassian also pursued this line of thought by describing Gallic monks as inferior to the Egyptians. E.g., *Inst.* 4.10.
65. *Con.* 19.9.1-2.
66. *Con.* 19.5.2.
67. “nec beneficio cellae nec perfugio solitudinis indigebit. *Con.* 18.13.
68. *Inst.* 9.7-8.
69. “fastidio an desiderio solitariae illius puritatis.” *Con.* 19.6.1.
70. “finis quidem cenobiotae est omnes suas mortificare et crucifigere uoluntates ac secundum euangelicae perfectionis salutare mandatum nihil de crastino cogitare.” *Con.* 19.8.3.
71. “heremitae uero perfectio est exutam mentem a cunctis habere terrenis eamque, quantum humana inbecillitas ualet, sic unire cum Christo.” *Con.* 19.8.4.
72. The following discussion relies on my analysis in “Palestinian,” 309-311.

73. “omnis monachi finis cordisque perfectio ad iugem atque indisruptam orationis perseuerantiam tendit, et quantum humanae fragilitati conceditur, ad immobilem tranquillitatem mentis ac perpetuam nititur puritatem, ob quam omnem tarn laborem corporis quam contritionem spiritus indefesse quaerimus et iugiter exercemus. et est inter alterutrum reciproca quaedam inseparabilisque coniunctio.” *Con.* 9.2.1.

74. Rousseau, “Cassian,” 114, has noted that Cassian’s discussion of pure prayer also inaugurates a return to the discussion of monastic *praxis*.

75. *Con.* 10.6.2-3.

76.

Con. 1.8.1.

77. *Con.* 9.2.1.

78. *Con.* 23.13.1-2.

79. *Con.* 9.2.1.

80. Cassian described the soul as a feather which will naturally ascend if it is not impeded by the weight of earthly concerns. *Con.* 9.4.1.

81. Rousseau, “Cassian,” 114. For the impossibility of this union, see *Con.* 1.13.1.

82. *Inst.* 4.10.

83. *Inst.* 2.15.1-2; 4.10.

84. *Inst.* 2.14.

85. *Inst.* 9.7,13.

86. *Con.* 9.15,26.

87. Leroy, “Les Prefaces,” 167-170.

88. For example, *Con.* 24.3-4.

89. *Con.* 9.35.

90. For the desert as a metaphor for purity in monastic literature, Guillaumont, “Conception” 3-21; Goehring, “Encroaching” 281-296.

CHAPTER 6

Implications for *Theoria*

Reading, Interiority and the Transfiguration of the Self

WITHDRAWAL AND INTERIORITY

Withdrawal *from* the Visible and Ephemeral

Cassian's use of *anachoresis* as a metaphor for interiority is rich with implications. On one level, interiority requires that we withdraw *from* what is visible and ephemeral. We must therefore withdraw from the turbulence, desire and distraction that human company presents. We must also avoid gratifying the desires of a body that is merely a temporary repository for the soul. Finally, we must withdraw from the distraction of the corporeal world itself, so that we might focus more fully on the spiritual kingdom of God. As was shown in the last chapter, however, such a withdrawal cannot be complete in our fallen and embodied condition. We cannot withdraw completely from human society, for the divine command to love one another must be expressed through outward gestures of hospitality.¹ Nor can we ignore the fact of our embodiment. We must eat, for excessive fasting can inhibit prayer and cause madness.² We must sleep at regular intervals or be overcome by drowsiness.³ Finally, we cannot focus continually on the kingdom of God, for such uninterrupted attention to the spiritual realm awaits death and the transcendence of our earthly bodies.⁴

Since we are unable to escape the limitations imposed on us by our fallen condition, we must explore the dynamic relationship between our exterior circumstances and our interior condition. In the *Institutes*, Cassian addresses this by exploring the relationship between patterns of behavior and the movements of the soul. Wearing the habit, for example, is an outward demonstration of renunciation and obedience, but

each article of the habit also affects the monk's interior disposition by inspiring discipline, aiding the memorization of Scripture, and helping to inculcate virtue.⁵ The routine of canonical hours, which is a custom of the outer person, helps to cultivate the ceaseless prayer of the inner person.⁶ The external fast, which is the regulation of diet, must be joined with an internal fast, which is the quelling of the disturbances of the soul.⁷ One should not seek chastity of the body alone. Inner chastity, an almost angelic separation of the soul from the body, is the true goal.⁸ The list could go on.

Cassian also takes up this theme in the *Conferences*. As Rousseau has noted, while the declared topic of *Conferences* 9 and 10 is pure and ceaseless prayer, they also revive a discussion of the activities and thoughts that disturb us when we pray.⁹ Cassian argues that what we do before we pray will return to us as we pray.¹⁰ We must therefore rid ourselves of any actions, attitudes or thoughts that can distract us from prayer, “so that [our mind] may begin to be raised little by little (*paulatim*) to the contemplation of God and to spiritual insights.”¹¹ *Paulatim* is a key term in this passage. Our ascent to God in prayer will occur little by little, and this ascent will be in proportion to the degree of our purity. *Praxis* and prayer mutually support each other in a reciprocal and ever-deepening relationship. The correction of habits (*emendatio moruni*) leads to the peace and equanimity of the soul that is necessary for pure and ceaseless prayer.

Withdrawal *to* the Invisible and Real

On another level, anchorites withdraw not so much *from* the visible and ephemeral as *to* the invisible and the real.

Following Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, Cassian maintains that only what is invisible is real.¹² What is visible is merely temporary.¹³ Thus, like Origen before him, Cassian argues that in order to gain true knowledge of something, we must penetrate beyond what is external and visible to the true nature of its being.¹⁴ This pertains not only to the world around us, but to ourselves as well. Only our spiritual nature, our animate and intellective capacities, determine who we are as human beings. Our bodies, which are dumb and insensate except that they participate in our souls, merely envelop us.¹⁵ Dwelling in such dense and limiting bodies is a visible sign of our separation from God, and to the degree that we are at home in our bodies, we are apart from God.¹⁶ True self-knowledge therefore requires that we cease to be driven by or even cognizant of our external condition. Only by departing from our bodies can we be present to Christ.¹⁷

This does not mean that Cassian regards the body as evil. Nor does he describe it merely as a prison that must be transcended or escaped. As a creation of God, the body is good. It can even be used to lead us back to God. The material world and our own corporeality provide opportunities to practice virtue and offer evidence of a benevolent creator. We can regain knowledge of God lost in the fall through the cultivation of virtue. We can ascend to the contemplation of spiritual mysteries by contemplating the divine order of creation.¹⁸ Ironically, even the very grossness of our bodies that pulls us away from the spiritual realm can be of assistance in our ascent to God, for the denseness of our bodies causes a momentary delay between our desire and our ability to act upon that desire. This delay provides an opportunity to reflect on the origins of the desire and to consider the consequences of our actions. Our embodiment

therefore places us in a better situation than that of the demons. Possessing much more ethereal bodies than our own, demons are not similarly constrained by a delay between desire and action, so that all of their evil desires immediately become evil acts.¹⁹

Our bodies become less helpful as we grow closer to God, however, and they ultimately prove to be more a hindrance than a help.²⁰ Attending to bodily needs forces us to descend from the heights of contemplation and prevents us from dwelling permanently in the kingdom of God. Our reliance on sense perception and mental images to derive and convey meaning clouds rather than reveals spiritual mysteries. We must therefore withdraw as far as possible from the limitations our bodies impose upon us. As was argued above, complete withdrawal awaits our resurrection, where with new, almost immaterial bodies we will be granted a new knowledge and dwell permanently in the kingdom of God. Significant progress is still possible in this life, however, for divine grace and the practice of Christian *ascesis* enable us to put aside the distractions of the visible and temporary in order to comprehend what is permanent and real within ourselves.

Again like Origen, and also like Antony, Cassian describes this *ascesis* primarily in positive terms. We are not to punish our bodies for past sins. Instead, we are to look beyond our bodies' needs and desires so that we might dwell in the kingdom of God. We must give attention only to what is permanent and real. We must cultivate a growing detachment from our bodily condition and develop an enhanced awareness of our inner selves.²¹ Once we have rejected the vices that plague us, we will be able to recognize that the universe itself is something to be despised. Though a creation

of God and a wonder to behold, it will eventually pass away. This applies even to the practices and virtues that lead us to the invisible and the real. Following 1 Corinthians 13, Cassian writes that there will be no need for Christian *ascesis* when the kingdom of God is at hand.²² Even faith and hope will pass away, for only love will remain when God is revealed in the fullness of his glory.²³

READING AND MYSTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Reading is an essential part of the *ascesis* that leads from the visible to the invisible, or from the sign to what is signified. Outwardly, reading (or listening) to a text is the foundation of the *horarium*. Reading while alone in one's cell is also frequently recommended. However, Cassian does not limit reading to the immediate engagement of a physical text.²⁴ He instead combines the apprehension of the words of the text with memorization, rumination and ceaseless meditation upon those words. These practices help to give stability and peace to a mind that can never truly be at rest. Like a millstone, the mind is always spinning and seeking some image or thought to grind. If holy images are not available to it, then the mind will cull the memory for other, potentially harmful images.²⁵ Constant meditation upon a text provides grist for a constantly turning mind.

Over time, the continual repetition of a text will enable its words and images to fill our mind day and night so that it increasingly resembles the text it contains. The words and images of the text will permeate even our unconscious mind and we will be afforded new meanings and interpretations as we sleep.²⁶ In the end, unceasing rumination and meditation upon scripture and other holy texts will transform our mind into something akin to the ark of the covenant, which possesses what is holy to the exclusion of all that is not.²⁷ As we are formed by the text and grow in knowledge of God, we will become immune to the assaults of evil spirits as though protected by the same cherubim who protected the ark.²⁸

Reading is not simply part of monastic discipline; it also presupposes it. We can only derive meaning from a sacred text if we are sufficiently pure to receive that meaning. Otherwise, the text will remain mere words, a beautiful ornament that is unable to convey true knowledge or transform the reader. Thus, the first step toward reading is not the mastery of grammar, but rather the mastery of humility.²⁹ Secular learning does not help one derive meaning from a text and can even hinder the act of reading. Germanus complains to *abba* Nesteros that images from tales he read as a child continue to disturb him even as he attempts to focus his mind on holy things.³⁰ Nesteros replies that the only remedy is continual reading and meditation upon sacred texts, so that the images Germanus acquired in his youth can eventually be driven out and replaced with holy thoughts.³¹ *Abba* Theodore is further proof of the futility of secular learning. When confronted with a difficult text, he did not rely upon his education, for he had none. He instead turned toward the quiet of his cell.³²

Reading requires that we free ourselves from all distractions, “for it is impossible for a soul which is even slightly occupied with the distractions of the world to deserve the gift of knowledge or to become one who begets spiritual understanding or who remembers the sacred readings.”³³ As we grow in virtue, the text will be transformed. It will acquire new and deeper meaning in proportion to the degree we are oriented toward and transformed by the presence of God. “With the renewal of our mind increasing through this study, the face of Scripture also begins to be renewed and the beauty of more holy understanding will advance according to the measure of [our] advancing.”³⁴ There is a strong and reciprocal relationship between reading and the ascent to

God. The act of reading is transformed as we ourselves are transformed by our engagement with the text.

This is seen most clearly in Cassian's discussion of spiritual knowledge in *Conference* 14, where he describes such knowledge as the contemplation of the "secrets of invisible mysteries."³⁵ Cassian divides this knowledge into two kinds. First, there is practical knowledge, "which is perfected by the correction of habits and the purgation of the vices."³⁶ Then there is theoretical knowledge (*itheoria*), "which consists in the contemplation of divine things and the knowledge of the most sacred thoughts."³⁷ This second form of knowledge is closely associated with the act of reading and can itself be divided into two kinds. The first kind of knowledge is the historical sense of a particular text, which Cassian calls "knowledge of past and visible things."³⁸ The second kind of knowledge is the spiritual sense of a text, and this can be further sub-divided into the tropological (or moral), allegorical and anagogical senses.³⁹

The historical sense of the text pertains to the activity of God in history and his express desires and commands for his people. It tells the story of Abraham's sons, for example, or reveals God's express command not to fornicate.⁴⁰ In this *Conference*, Cassian suggests that deriving the historical sense of the text does not require an interpretive act, for it contains no meaning other than the bare sounds of the words.⁴¹ The meaning of the text can therefore be grasped by anyone who possesses the ability to read or listen to the text. This claim is not entirely consistent with his earlier argument concerning anthropomorphic descriptions of God, however, for in *Institute* 8 Cassian argues that even the historical sense requires some interpretive ability. When we read of the body

or the passions of God, we cannot interpret the text according to its bare letters and sounds.⁴² Even the primitive knowledge of God revealed by the historical sense compels us to recognize these words as anthropomorphic descriptions of a spiritual and impassible God. If we are to embrace the knowledge offered by the historical sense of the text, then we must embrace the God who is revealed by and in the text.

The spiritual senses lay bare the meaning concealed within the historical sense. The allegorical sense reveals when the words of the text prefigure Christ in some way. The rock rejected by the builders, for example, prefigures Christ as the cornerstone of the Church. The food and drink that the Israelites had in common during the Exodus prefigure the body and blood of Christ on the altar.⁴³ The tropological sense deepens the bare moral instruction of the historical sense. More than moral exhortation or a list of prohibitions, this interpretation enables us to apply knowledge gained from the spiritual sense to the practical side of our lives. An allegorical reading of Genesis, for example, reveals to the reader that Isaac and Ishmael prefigure the two covenants. A tropological reading of these two covenants offers the reader a deeper understanding of *praxis* and *theoria*, the two poles of the monastic life.⁴⁴ Such a reading extends even to the express moral commands of the historical sense. God's command not to fornicate can be understood tropologically as a general prohibition against all impurity, all forms of pagan worship and idolatry, the superstitions of the law, and even heretical teaching.⁴⁵ Purification from vice and the cultivation of virtue do not cease with the mastery of literal commandments and exemplars. They continue as we enter more deeply into the text and into our relationship with God.

Of particular interest to Cassian's understanding of reading is the anagogical sense, which he describes as arising "from the spiritual mysteries [of the allegorical sense] to the even more sublime and sacred mysteries of Heaven."⁴⁶

A "holy and unceasing rumination of the divine law," anagogy reveals the invisible.⁴⁷ It enables us "to enter into the veins and marrow of the heavenly sayings and contemplate with the most pure eye of the heart the profound and hidden mysteries."⁴⁸ It is the culmination of the experience of reading as well as the pinnacle of our ascent to God. To read anagogically is to withdraw from the outer to the inner, from the visible to the invisible. In the end, the reader withdraws from the words of the text themselves to contemplate the invisible and ineffable mysteries of God.

This withdrawal from the visible to the invisible is partly a product of the act of reading itself. When we read, we abandon the concrete markers that locate us in the world of sense perception and withdraw to a new reality that is constituted by our engagement with the text.⁴⁹ Iser describes being present to this reality as "being lifted out of time—the past is without influence, and the future is unimaginable."⁵⁰ He goes on to argue that "to be truly caught up in such a present involves forgetting oneself."⁵¹ Iser modifies this notion of being present, for he acknowledges that we cannot entirely abandon our sense of self while reading. Indeed, the self of the reader remains in the background and participates in the interpretative process while simultaneously being transformed by it. In Worthen's terms, the self of the reader does not disappear but rather is remade through "the dialectic of identity with and distance from the text."⁵²

Cassian, of course, uses his own terms to describe the act of reading, and it must be remembered that he is concerned with more than a theory of aesthetic response. In light of the argument made above about reading helping to still our minds, Cassian would agree with contemporary critics that the act of reading itself serves to isolate us from our external circumstances and cultivate an interior disposition. His agreement would be limited, however, by his belief that the transformative power of reading does not lie entirely, or even primarily, in our engagement with the text alone. When reading scripture or other sacred texts, we engage both the text and the Word who underlies and is revealed by it. When we withdraw from the sensible and visible, we withdraw to more than a textual universe constituted by our engagement with the text. We withdraw instead to the Word of God who inspires the text. Prayerful reading of a text gradually transforms the text into an object of contemplation. As we read, we move slowly beyond the literal signs and symbols of the text to the God who both inspires and is signified by the text. In the end, we transcend the historical artifacts of God's revelation to contemplate the transfigured and ineffable Word himself. Moving beyond the visible, or the mere signs, we ascend to an experience of God that is entirely non-discursive and without signs. We continue to communicate with God, but in a way that is completely devoid of words or other exterior points of reference. In its purest form, reading scripture anagogically is a non-discursive act.

READING AND THE INTERIORIZATION OF THE TEXT

In many ways, the non-discursive character of anagogy recalls Cassian's understanding of pure prayer. Cassian describes such prayer as transcending all sensible and mental images. It is non-discursive, unintelligible, and offered to God by means of inarticulate groans. Both the content and the experience of the prayer are ineffable. "That is not a perfect prayer, says [Antony], wherein a monk understands himself or that which he prays."⁵³ The connection between the anagogical sense of scripture and pure prayer becomes complete when Cassian locates the origin of pure prayer in the act of reading itself. However, before discussing this connection, it is first necessary to review Cassian's discussion of prayer more generally.

This discussion begins in *Conference* 9, where Germanus complains of his inability to maintain a pure and focused mind when praying.⁵⁴ *Abba* Isaac avoids addressing Germanus' lament directly and instead uses it as a starting point for discussing prayer more generally. Following 1 Timothy, Isaac divides prayer into four categories: supplications (*obsecrationes*), prayers (*orationes*), intercessions (*postulationes*), and thanksgivings (*gratiarum actiones*).⁵⁵ The different circumstances in which we find ourselves can inspire any one of these prayers, either individually or in combination. Nevertheless, a hierarchy seems to be implied. Supplications seem to pertain more to the beginner, whereas thanksgivings pertain more to the those who have gained freedom from care and can contemplate "the generosity and compassion of the Lord."⁵⁶

Just as in his description of the senses of scripture, Cassian bases his hierarchy of prayer on the purity and knowledge of the one praying. If we are to ascend this hierarchy and master prayer in all its forms, he argues, then we must interiorize the outward gesture of the *horarium*. We must subject our will in the spirit of true humility. We must avoid carnal desire so that we can lessen the weight of the flesh upon our soul and ascend more easily to God.⁵⁷ We must learn to discern good from bad and to judge the best path by which we can pursue greater knowledge of God. Finally, we must attain the impassibility in which carnal desire and wandering thoughts no longer disturb our mind. Of course, ascent to God cannot be guaranteed either when reading or when praying. Nor can such an ascent be attributed solely to our own effort. To do so would be to restrict the freedom of God's grace and to deny that God reveals himself to humanity, rather than humanity slowly and implacably disclosing God. However, Cassian does argue that one can discern an ascending or spiraling relationship between *praxis* and prayer, just as between *praxis* and reading.

In the subsequent *Conference* Germanus becomes frustrated that Isaac has so far avoided addressing his complaint. He therefore rephrases his question, this time asking "by what meditation God might be held or comprehended in thought."⁵⁸ The depth and maturity of Germanus' question so impresses Isaac that he reveals the key to yet another form of prayer that transcends the categories provided in 1 Timothy.⁵⁹ This is an ineffable prayer of the purest force, inspired by the Holy Spirit and beyond human comprehension.⁶⁰ Most often associated with the anchorite, it is a form of prayer that can occur at any time in a monk's career. As with the other categories of prayer, the human

mind and the divine will do not permit a simple linear ascent. However, Cassian continues to speak of a balance between purity and prayer.⁶¹ One must purge the mind of carnal desire and direct it toward spiritual things. One must withdraw from all that is exterior and ephemeral, even from the signs and symbols that lead to God, to contemplate the spiritual mysteries with a pure and undisturbed soul.

It is crucial to Cassian's understanding of reading that the key to such a continuous and non-discursive prayer is constant meditation upon a single verse from Psalms: "God come to my assistance; Lord, hasten to my aid."⁶² This verse "takes all the affections which can be attributed to human nature and is sufficiently and suitably adapted to any state and to all assaults."⁶³ To prove this Cassian surveys the vices from gluttony to pride in order to show how this one small verse addresses each of the vices that plague us.⁶⁴ It leads us to call out for aid when plagued by improper desire or incited to anger. It reminds us of our frailty when puffed up by vainglory or pride. The verse also reminds us of our continued need for God even after we have triumphed over the vices. Constant meditation on this single verse will enable us to cast off all other thoughts. We will then be truly poor in spirit, for we will recognize in the deepest recesses of our soul that our very life and substance depend on divine aid. Having been stripped of all worldly concern and wandering thoughts, we will ascend slowly through the sacred mysteries to the contemplation of God.⁶⁵

Cassian extends his treatment of this one verse to the book of Psalms as a whole. In doing this, he reflects the view of psalmody that Athanasius expressed in his *Letter to Marcellinus*. The words of the Psalms serve as a mirror to the

soul. We find in the Psalms types of our own life, our own experiences and emotions. The Psalms provide a vocabulary for exploring our interior life and a salve to heal what has been broken.⁶⁶ Reading and meditating upon this verse is more than a form of *praxis*, however. While it stills our constantly churning mind and provides a means to explore the depths of our soul, it also pertains to *theoria*, or the knowledge of the spiritual mysteries that is derived from reading scripture in an increasingly profound way. Dwelling upon both the words and the situation of the Psalmist, we will establish an identity with the Psalmist that bridges the distance of time and place. Adopting the experience and disposition of the Psalmist as our own, we will learn to anticipate the meaning of the words rather than merely respond to them.⁶⁷ We will sing them as if we, rather than the Psalmist, have composed them.

In this, Cassian recalls Origen as well as Athanasius. Virtually writing rather than reading the words of the Psalms implies an immediate encounter with the Word of God who inspires them. Sharing in the production of the Psalms requires sharing in the experience of their inspiration, which is an experience of the Word himself. The pinnacle of reading, and of the Christian life as a whole, is an unmediated encounter with the Word who inspires the sacred text.⁶⁸ Such an encounter requires the internalization of the Word, something Crouzel describes as an “application to each Christian of what is said of Christ, an *intériorisation* in each Christian of the facts, of the deeds and virtues of Christ.”⁶⁹

READING AND THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE SELF

For both Cassian and Origen, reading is part of the process of human redemption. Scripture is a source of knowledge of the Word who is the Son of God and the means by which humanity is restored to God. While the incarnation of the Word in the person of Jesus Christ provided a unique and full revelation of God, this revelation did not begin with the incarnation; nor has it ceased with Jesus' death. The Word is eternally begotten of the Father. Through the Word all things were created. The Word inspired Moses and the prophets. All Christians are called upon to embrace the Word through the practice of virtue, the inculcation of love, and the pursuit of knowledge. As the Christian is called to and embraces the Word, the Word takes life within him or her.

Most important for Cassian's understanding of reading is that scripture itself can be regarded as an incarnation of the Word.⁷⁰ It is the spiritual mystery of the Word embodied in language, a series of signs. When reading, we encounter, understand and ultimately discard these signs until we come upon the Word who is signified. This is possible because the Word simultaneously accommodates itself to the needs of the reader and calls the reader to ascend to God in purity, love and knowledge. As we become less concerned with earthly and material things and grow in knowledge, we transcend the physical, the revelation of God in history, the words of the text, to encounter the mystery of the Word himself. This ascent is revealed in Origen's nomenclature for the three senses or levels of meaning: body, soul, and spirit.⁷¹ The sense of scripture available to us corresponds to that aspect of

the human personality that dominates us. Only those who have grown in purity and transcended their physical liabilities will ascend to the loftier senses of scripture and, ultimately, to the Word himself.⁷²

This ascent of the Christian both through and to the Word is evident in Origen's commentary on the transfiguration, where he speaks of the Word being manifest in different forms according to the capacity of the individual. It is possible, Origen claims, that Jesus might appear to some as transfigured and yet appear to others as carnal.⁷³ What determines a reader's capacity for comprehending the divinity of the Word is the grace of God and the reader's own purity, love and knowledge. If we hope to view the transfigured Word, we must abandon all earthly and visible things and celebrate a new sabbath, one in which all creation has been put aside and all signs and symbols of God have been abandoned. Only then can we behold the divinity of the Son of God.⁷⁴

Origen regards it as important that more than just the body of Jesus is transfigured. His clothes are also transformed; clothes which Origen describes as the expressions and the letters of the gospels. The words of the apostles are also part of Jesus' raiment, so that the entire New Testament is worn by Christ and transformed when the reader apprehends the divinity of the Word. Moreover, Moses and Elijah also appear transfigured and shine with the light of the sun. When one has perceived the spiritual mysteries of the gospel, one has also recognized the spiritual meaning of the law and the prophets.⁷⁵

For Origen, the words of scripture are signs which lead ultimately to the divinity of the Word who is the Son of God. Those who are pure in heart and aided by grace are led to abandon earthly and visible things, including the words of scripture themselves, to contemplate the divinity of the Word in all its glory. Those who do not ascend this lofty mountain still know the Word and this knowledge is redemptive, but their knowledge is confined to the Word in its flesh, be it the bodily Jesus or the body (the literal sense) of the text.

Cassian offers a strikingly similar understanding of reading scripture and, moreover, uses the transfiguration of Christ to express his views. We contemplate God more clearly, he argues, when we move beyond the historical manifestation of the Word in the person of Jesus Christ to view the Word revealed in all his glory.⁷⁶ This movement can be characterized as withdrawal into solitude, but not a solitude that results merely from abandoning human company. Instead, the solitude of which Cassian speaks arises when we shed all that is foreign to us, all that is merely exterior, and penetrate to the interior constitution of our being.

But they alone look upon his divinity with the purest eyes who, ascending from lowly and earthly deeds and thoughts, go apart with [Jesus] into the high mountain of solitude which, free from the tumult of all earthly thoughts and disturbances, hidden from the confusion of all the vices, and exulted by the purest faith and the prominence of the virtues, reveals the glory of [Jesus'] face and the image of his splendor to those who deserve to see him with the pure sight of the soul.⁷⁷

Scripture “will appear earthly to the carnal and divine to the spiritual.”⁷⁸ If we climb the mountain of solitude, we will no longer be limited by the literal sense of the text. Only by shedding the exterior or fleshly life of the text (the literal sense and even the words themselves) will we discern its true meaning. Reading will become a non-discursive act, just as true prayer is inarticulate and ecstatic, lifted up to God “with indescribable groans and sighs.”⁷⁹ We will move from the visible to the invisible, from signs to what is signified, from the outer to the inner life of both scripture and of ourselves. At that point we will no longer have any use for words, just as we will no longer have any use for our bodies. We will be able to say with Paul that we see Christ, but no longer according to the flesh.⁸⁰

READING AND EGYPTIAN MONASTIC CULTURE

Both Cassian and Origen regard climbing the mountain of the transfiguration as attaining purity of heart and shedding concern for earthly and material things. Both speak of moving beyond the material to contemplate the Word in its divinity. Both also speak of the ones left behind who, though redeemed by the Word, are confined to the literal sense (the “flesh”) of scripture and are unable to apprehend the Word in all its glory. Finally, the two theologians regard the culmination of reading as a state that transcends the written word, the physical sign of the divinity, to contemplate the glory of the divinity who transcends all words and all signs.

However, these similarities do not necessarily mean that Cassian borrowed directly from Origen or from any other single source. It is far more likely that they arise from the pervasiveness of Origen’s understanding of reading within Egyptian monastic culture as a whole. While Cassian’s reliance on Evagrius has long been noted, and he was the most prolific writer among the “Origenist” monks of Nitria and Kellia, he was not typically described as a leader among them. Antony’s *Letters* and Athanasius’ *Letter to Marcellinus* demonstrate Origen’s influence on Egyptian monastic thought and practice. Burton-Christie has shown that the *Apophthegmata* demonstrate a culture that in many ways is founded upon the act of reading. While the sayings sometimes reveal an opposition to speculative theology, they also reveal a strong relationship between reading and the practice of virtue, as well as a call to internalize and embody scripture that would be at home among more ostensibly “Origenist” monks. Origen’s influence on Egyptian monastic culture

extended well beyond the traditional categories of allegorical exegesis, *apokatastasis*, and the Anthropomorphite controversy to embrace a way of life founded to a large extent by the act of reading itself.⁸¹

Cassian was both a product and a proponent of this culture. Whether formed in Egypt or among Egyptian monks living in exile, he embraced their practice of psalmody and was transformed by it. By internalizing the text, Cassian made it his own. Virtually becoming the author of the text itself, he moved beyond the visible, the material, the symbolic, the very words themselves, to the Word who inspired all these things. Penetrating to the veins and marrow of the text, Cassian encountered the sacred mysteries which lie beneath it and give it life. He moved beyond an encounter with the written word to an encounter with the Word who both gives meaning to the text and who constitutes the deepest level of our own interior selves.

As a proponent of this culture of reading, Cassian calls upon his readers to attempt much the same thing. Reading serves to constitute the monastic life. It provides a pattern for behavior and it promotes a solitude that encourages interpretation and self-reflection. It inculcates the impassibility and interiority that is the goal of Christian *ascesis*. Cassian's understanding of reading goes far

beyond a discussion of exegetical categories to address the way in which one reads and lives. When commending reading, he is in fact commending a particular form of contemplative life, an embrace and even an embodiment of the Word who underlies the text and gives it meaning.

NOTES

1. *Con.* 23.5.1. Also the story of *abba* John, *Con.* 19.5.1.
2. *Inst.* 5.9.
3. *Inst.* 3.8.
4. *Con.* 3.6.3-4.
5. *Inst.* 1.1,11.
6. *Inst.* 2.9; *Con.* 1-10, *praef.* 5.
7. *Inst.* 5.21.
8. *Inst.* 6.6; 12.11; *Con.* 12.13-14.
9. Rousseau, “Contemplation,” 114.
10. *Con.* 9.3.3.
11. “ut ita paulatim ad contemplationem dei ac spiritales intuitus incipiat sublimari.” *Con.* 9.3.2.
12. 2 Cor. 4:18.
13. *Con.* 3.10.4.
14. *Con.* 3.6.3-4; 3.10.4. One could say of Cassian what Crouzel, *Origen*, 82, has written of Origen: “For Origen, the only true knowledge of things is the knowledge of their inner rationality, their cause, their reason for being.”
15. *Con.* 1.14.8-9.

16. *Con.* 1.14.9.

17. *Con.* 1.10.2.

18. *Con.* 1.15.1-2.

19. *Con.* 4.13-14.

20. *Con.* 23.16.1-2.

21. This is the substance of Cassian's first two renunciations, which are renunciation of wealth and the behaviors, vices and affections of the soul and body. The third, and last, is the renunciation of the present and visible for the sake of the future and invisible. *Con.* 3.6.1.

22. *Con.* 1.10.1-2.

23. *Con.* 1.11.1-2. 1 Cor. 13:8-13.

24. Most often this would be scripture, and especially the Psalms. Monastic reading was not limited to scripture, however, and other texts could also be read.

25. *Con.* 1.18.1-2.

26. *Con.* 14.10.4.

27. *Con.* 14.10.2.

28. *Con.* 14.10.3.

29. *Con.* 14.10.1.

30. *Con.* 14.16.6.

31.

Con. 14.12-13.

32. *Inst.* 5.33.

33. “impossibile namque est animam, quae mundanis uel tenuiter distentionibus occupatur, donum scientiae promereri uel generatricem spiritualium sensuum aut tenacem sacrarum fieri lectionum.” *Con.* 14.9.3.

34. “crescente autem per hoc studium innouatione mentis nostrae etiam scripturarum facies incipiet innouari, et sacratoris intellegentiae pulchritudo quodammodo cum proficiente proficiet.” *Con.* 14.11.1.

35. “inuisibilium sacramentorum ... arcana.” *Con.* 14.1.3.

36. “quae emendatione morum et uitiorum purgatione perficitur.” *Con.* 14.1.3.

37. “quae in contemplatione diuinarum rerum et sacratissimorum sensuum cognitione consistit.” *Con.* 14.1.3.

38. “praeteritarum ac uisibilium agnitionem ... rerum.” *Con.* 14.8.2.

39. *Con.* 14.8.1.

40. *Con.* 14.8.2; 14.11.2.

41. “doctrina uero simplicem historicae expositionis ordinem pandit, in qua nullus occultior intellectus nisi qui uerbis resonat continetur.” *Con.* 14.8.7.

42. *Inst.* 8.4.

43. *Con.* 14.8.5.

44. *Con.* 14.8.3.

45. *Con.* 14.11.2-5.

46. “de spiritalibus mysteriis ad sublimiora quaedam et sacratiora caelorum secreta.” *Con.* 14.8.3.

47. “diuinae legis sancta et incessabilis ruminatio.” *Con.* 14.13.7. *Contra* Markus, *End*, 187, who argues that “contemplation, understood as some kind of experience or vision in this life, is in fact absent from his discussion here.”

48. “uenas ac medullas caelestium intrare dictorum ac profunda et abscondita sacramenta purissimo cordis oculo contemplan.” *Con.* 14.9.7.

49. “The reality of texts is not a real world that exists prior to and outside of the text, but rather a reaction to the world constituted in a textual universe.” Fish, *Is There*, 328.

50. Iser, *Act*, 156.

51. Iser, *Act*, 156.

52. Worthen, “Self,” 157.

53. “non est, inquit, perfecta oratio, in qua se monachus uel hoc ipsum quod orat intellegit.” *Con.* 9.31.

54. *Con.* 7.1-3. It will be recalled that *Conferences* 9 and 10 originally served as the culmination of Cassian’s monastic *corpus* and of the monastic life itself.

55. *Con.* 9.8-14; 1 Tim. 2:1.

56. “munificentias domini ac miserationes.” *Con.* 9.15.1.

57. *Con.* 9.3-4.

58. “qua meditatione teneatur uel cogitetur deus.” *Con.* 10.8.4.

59. *Con.* 10.9.1-3.

60. *Con.* 9.15.2.

61. *Con.* 10.6.1. For the relationship between *Conferences* 9 and 10, Stewart, “Cassian,” 159-177.

62.

“Deus in adiutorium meum intende: domine ad adiuuandum mihi festina.” *Con.* 10.10.2; Psalm 69.2.

63. “recipit enim omnes adfectus quicumque inferri humanae possunt naturae et ad omnem statum atque uniuersos incursus proprie satis et competenter aptatur.” *Con.* 10.10.3.

64. *Con.* 10.10.3-13.

65. *Con.* 10.11.1-2.

66. “Le ‘je’ peut et doit être assumé par le fidèle, qui découvre en lui comme en un miroir l’image de sa vie intérieure.” Rondeau, *Les commentaires*, 218.

67. *Con.* 10.11.5-6.

68. Crouzel, *Origen*, 73, writes the following of Origen’s understanding of spiritual exegesis: “If the Bible is not to remain the ‘closed book’ of Isaiah or of the Revelation, an intimate word of God must be heard by the soul when it is read. The charism of the interpreter is the same as that of the inspired author. To understand Isaiah or Daniel one must have in oneself the same Holy Spirit and one can only interpret the Gospel if one has within oneself the *nous*, the mind of Christ, which the Spirit gives.”

69. Thus Crouzel, *Origen*, 76, speaks of Origen’s exegesis of the New Testament, but this can easily be extended to the whole of scripture.

70. Origen, *Deprin.* 4.2.3.

71. Origen, *De prin.* 4.1.11-14.

72. Origen finds “contained in Scripture ... an order of doctrine which corresponds to the progressive steps of the Christian’s movement toward perfection.” Torjeson, *Hermeneutical Procedure*, 41.

73. Origen, *Comm, in Matt.* 12.37.

74. Origen, *Comm, in Matt.* 12.36.

75. Origen, *Comm, in Matt.* 12.38.

76. *Con.* 10.6.1-2.

77. “sed illi soli purissimis oculis diuinitatem ipsius speculantur, qui de humilibus ac terrenis operibus et cogitationibus ascendentes cum illo secedunt in excelso solitudinis monte, qui liber ab omnium terrenarum cogitationum ac perturbationum tumultu et a cunctorum uitiorum permixtione secretus, fide purissima ac uirtutum eminentia sublimatus, gloriam uultus eius et claritatis reuelat imaginem his qui merentur eum mundis animae obtutibus intueri.” *Con.* 10.6.2.

78. “uel terrena carnalibus uel diuina spiritalibus adparebit.” *Con.* 14.11.1.

79. “gemitibus inenarrabilibus atque suspiriis.” *Con.* 10.11.

80. *Con.* 10.6.2.

81. MacLeod, “Allegory,” 371, argues that for Origen “allegory is the expression *par excellence* of the spiritual life.”

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

Antonius magnus abbas. *Epistulae vii*. PG 40: 977-1000.

Apophthegmata patrum. Collectio alphabetica. PG 65: 71-440.

Athanasius Alexandrinus. Epistula ad Amun. PG 26: 1169-1176.

_____. *Epistula ad Marcellinum*. PG 27: 12-45.

_____. *Epistula ad monachos*. PG 26: 1185-1188.

_____. *Vita Antonii*. Ed. and trans. G. J. M. Bartelink. Vie d'Antoine. SC 400. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1994. Latin versions: *Versio uetustissima*. Ed. Henricus Hoppenbrouwers. *La plus ancienne version latine de la Vie de S. Antoine par S. Athanase*. Nijmegen, 1960. *Versio Euagrii*. PG 26: 833-976.

Augustinus episcopus Hipponensis. *Confessionum librixiii*. Ed. Lucas Verheijen. CCSL 27. Turnhout: Brepols, 1981.

_____. *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum*. Ed. John B. Bauer. CSEL 90. Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1992.

Bonifatius I papa. *Epistulae*. PL 20: 750-784.

Caelestinus I papa. *Epistula ad episcopos per Viennensem et Narbonensem prouincias*. PL 50: 429-436.

Cassianus abbas Massiliensis. *Conlationes xxiiii*. Ed. Michael Petschenig. CSEL 13. Vienna-Leipzig, 1886. Also, ed. and trans. E[ugène] Pichery. *Conférences*. SC 42, 54, 64. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1955, 1958, 1959.

_____. *De incarnatione domini contra Nestorium*. Ed. Michael Petschenig. CSEL 17. Vienna and Leipzig, 1888.

_____. *De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium uitiorum remediis*. Ed. Michael Petschenig. CSEL 17. Also, ed. and trans. Jean-Claude Guy. *Institutions cénobitiques*. SC 109. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1965.

Egeria. *Itinerarium seu Peregrinatio ad loca sancta*. Ed. E. Franceschini and R. Weber. *Itineraria et alia geographia*. CCSL 175. Turnhout: Brepols, 1965.

Euagrius Ponticus. *Ad uirginem*. In *Nonnenspiegel und Mönchsspiegel des Euagrius Pontikos*. Ed. Hugo Gressman. TU 39,4:146-151. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1913.

———. *Antirrheticus*. EP, 472-544.

———. *Capita cognoscitiua*. Ed. and trans. J. Muyldermans. *Evagriana. Le Muséon* 44 (1931): 37-68. Also, “Évagre le Pontique. Les ‘Capita cognoscitiua’ dans les versions syriaque et arménienne.” *Le Muséon* 47 (1934): 73-106.

———. *De malignis cogitationibus*. PG 79: 1200-1233.

———. *De octo spiritibus malitiae*. PG 79: 1145-1164.

———. *De oratione*. PG 79: 1165-1200.

———. *Epistula ad Melaniam*. EP, 610-619 (Part one). Also, ed. and trans. Gösta Vitestam. *Seconde partie du traité qui passe sous le nom de “La grande lettre d’Évagre le Pontique à Mélanie VAncienne”*, publiée et traduite d’après le manuscrit du British Muséum Add. 17192. Scripta minora Regiae Societatis Humanarum Litterarum Lundensis 3:3-29. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1964.

———. *Gnosticus*. Ed. and trans. Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont. *Le gnostique ou celui qui est devenu digne de la science*. SC 356. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1989.

———. *Kephalaia gnostica*. Ed. and trans. Antoine Guillaumont. *Les six centuries des “Kephalaia gnostica” d’Évagre le Pontique. Edition critique de la version syriaque commune et édition d’une nouvelle version syriaque, intégrale, avec une double traduction française*. PO 28.1. Paris: 1958.

———. *Practicus*. Ed. and trans. Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont. *Traité pratique ou le moine*. SC 170-171. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971.

———. *Rerum monachalium rationes*. PG 40: 1252-1264.

———. *Scholia in prouerbia*. Ed. and trans. Paul Géhin. *Scholiés aux Proverbes*. SC 340. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1987.

———. *Scholia in psalmos*. In catena under the title *Origenis selecta in psalmos*. PG 12:1054-1686.

———. *Sententiae ad monachos*. Ed. Hugo Gressmann. *Nonnenspiegel und Mönchsspiegel des Evagrius Pontikos*. TU 39.4:152-165. Latin version. Ed. Jean Leclercq. “L’ancienne version latine des sentences d’Èvagre pour les moines.” *Scriptorium* 5 (1951): 195-214.

———. Sermo siue dogmatica epistula de sanctissima trinitate [ps.-Basilus, *Epistula* 8]. In *Saint Basile. Lettres*, ed. and trans. Yves Courtonne, pp. 22-37. 2 vols. Paris: Les belles lettres, 1957.

Eucherius episcopus Lugdunensis. *De contemptu mundi*. PL 50: 711-726.

———. *De laude heremi*. Ed. Charles Wotke, pp. 177-194. CSEL 31. Prague, Vienna and Leipzig, 1894.

Gennadius presbyter Massiliensis. *De uiris inlustribus*. Ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson. TU 14.1:57-97. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1896.

Gerontius. *Vita s. Melaniae iunioris*. Ed. and trans. Denys Gorce. *Vie de Sainte Melanie*. SC 90. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962.

Hieronymus presbyter. *Aduersus Iovinianum*. PL 23: 221-352.

———. *Chronicon*. Ed. J. K. Fotheringham. *Eusehii Pamphili chronici canones latine vertit, adauxit ad sua tempora produxit s. Eusebius Hieronymus*. London: H. Milford, 1923.

———. *Dialogus aduersus Pelagianos*. Ed. C. Moreschini. *S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera* 3.2. CCSL 80. Turnhout: Brepols, 1990.

———. *Epistulae*. Ed. Isidor Hilberg. CSEL 54-56. Vienna and Leipzig, 1910-1918.

———. *Epistula ad Praesidium*. Ed. Germain Morin. “Pour l’authenticité de la lettre de s. Jérôme à Présidius.” *Bulletin d’ancienne littérature et d’archéologie chrétiennes* 3 (1913): 52-60.

———. *In Hieremiam*. Ed. Siegfried Reiter. *S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera* 1.3. CCSL 74. Turnhout: Brepols, 1960.

———. *In Ioelem prophetam*. In *Commentarii in prophetas minores*, ed. M. Adriaen. *S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera* 1.6. CCSL 76. Turnhout: Brepols, 1969.

———. *Contra Vigilantium*. PL 23: 353-368.

———. *De oboedientia*. In *Opera homiletica*, ed. Germain Morin, pp. 551-555. *S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera* 2. CCSL 78. Turnhout: Brepols, 1958.

———. *Vita s. Hilarionis*. PL 23: 29-54.

———. *Vita s. Pauli*. PL 23: 17-30. Also, ed. Ignatius S. Kozik. *The First Desert Hero: St. Jerome’s ‘Vita Pauli’*. Mount Vernon, NY: King Lithographers, 1968.

Hilarius episcopus Arelatensis. *Sermo de uita s. Honorati*. Ed. and trans. Marie-Denise Valentin. *Vie de saint Honorât*. SC 235. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1977.

Historia monachorum in Aegypto. Ed. André-Jean Festugière. *Historia monachorum in Aegypto. Edition critique du texte grec et traduction annotée*. Subsidia hagiographica, no. 53. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1971. Latin version by Rufinus. Ed. Eva Schulz-Flügel. *Historia monachorum sive de vita sanctorum patrum*. Patristische Texte und Studien, bd. 34. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990.

Innocentius I papa. *Epistulae*. PL 20: 463-608.

Origenes. *Commentarii in Canticum*. Ed. and trans. Luc Brésard and Henri Crouzel. *Commentaire sur le cantique des cantiques*. SC 375-376. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991-92.

———. *Commentarii in Matthaeum*. Ed. E. Klostermann and E. Benz. GCS *Origines Werke* 10. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1935.

———. *Contra Celsum*. Ed. and trans. Marcel Borret. 5 vols. SC 132, 136, 147, 150, 227. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967-76.

———. *De principiis*. Ed. and trans. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti. *Traité des principes*. 5 vols. SC 252-253, 268-269, 312. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978-84.

———. *Homiliae in Iesu Nave XXVI*. Ed. W. A. Baehrens. GCS *Origenes Werke* 6. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1921.

———. *Homiliae in Numeros*. Ed. W. A. Baehrens. GCS *Origenes Werke* 7.2. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1921.

Pachomius Tabennensis. *Regula*. Latin version. *Pachomiana Latina: Règle et épîtres de Pachôme* > *Epître de Théodore et 'Liber'³ de Orsiesius: Texte latin de Jérôme*. Ed. Amand Boon, pp. 13-74. *Appendice: La Règle de Pachôme, fragments coptes et excerpta greco*. Ed. L. Th. Lefort. Bibliothèque de la Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, no. 7. Louvain: Bureaux de la Revue, 1932. Also, PL 23: 65-90.

———. *Dialogus de uita Iohannis Chrysostomi*. Ed. P. R. Coleman-Norton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928.

———. *Historia Lausiaca*. Ed. G. J. M. Bartelink. Trans. Marino Barchiesi. *Palladio: La storia Lausiaca*. Vol. 2, *Vite dei Santi*, ed. Christiane Mohrmann. [Milan]: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1974.

Paulinus episcopus Nolanus. *Epistulae*. Ed. William Hartel. CSEL 29. Prague, Vienna and Leipzig, 1894.

Pelagius. *Epistula ad Demetriadem*. PL 30: 15-45.

Prosper Aquitanus. *De gratia Dei et libero arbitrio contra Collatorem*. PL 51: 213-276.

———. *Epitoma Chronicorum*. In *Chronica minora saeculi IV-VII*, ed. Theodore Mommsen, pp. 385-485. Vol. 1. *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctores antiquissimi*, tm. 9. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892.

Rufinus Tyrannius. *Apologia (contra Hieronymum)*. In *Tyrannii Rufini Opera*, ed. Manlio Simonetti, pp. 37-123. CCSL 20. Turnhout: Brepols, 1961.

Sextus, Pseudo-. *Sexti Sententiae*. Ed. and trans. Richard A. Edwards and Robert A. Wild. *The Sentences of Sextus*. Texts and Translations, no. 22. Early Christian Literature Series, no. 5. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981. Latin version of Rufinus. Ed. Henry Chadwick. *The Sentences of Sextus. A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics*. Texts and Studies Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature, n.s., 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.

Sozomenus. *Historia ecclesiastica*. Ed. Joseph Bidez and Günther C. Hansen. *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte*. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte, bd. 50. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957.

Sulpicius Severus. *Dialogorum librill*. Ed. Charles Halm, pp. 152-216. CSEL 1. Vienna, 1866.

———. *Vita Martini Turonensis*. Ed. and trans. Jacques Fontaine. *Vie de saint Martin*. SC 133-135. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967.

Zosimus papa. *Epistulae*. PL 20: 642-686.

SECONDARY WORKS CONSULTED

Antin, Paul. "Le monachisme selon saint Jérôme." In *Recueil sur saint Jérôme*, ed. Paul Antin, pp. 101-28. Collection Latomus 95. Bruxelles: Latomus, 1968. First published in *Mélanges bénédictins publiés à l'occasion du XIVe centenaire de la mort de Saint Benoit par les moines de l'Abbaye de Saint-Jérôme de Rome*, pp. 71-103. (Abbaye s. Wandrille: Éditions de Fontenelle, 1947).

———. “Monachologie de saint Jérôme.” In *Recueil sur saint Jérôme*, pp. 135-136. First published in *Théologie de la vie monastique: Etudes sur la Tradition patristique*, pp. 191-199. *Théologie* 49. ([Paris]: Aubier, 1961).

———. “Question de vocabulaire: monachisme, ‘monachologie’.” In *Recueil sur saint Jérôme*, pp. 137-145. First published in *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 59 (1964): 89-90.

Appel, Regis. “Cassian’s *Discretio*—A Timeless Virtue.” *American Benedictine Review* 17 (1966): 20-29.

Bacht, Heinrich. “*Meditatio* in den ältesten Mönchsquellen.” *Geist und Leben* 28 (1955): 360-373.

Bagnall, Roger. *Egypt in Late Antiquity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Bamberger, John E. *Evagrius Ponticus, The Praktikos and Chapters on Prayer*. Cistercian Studies Series, no. 4. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1981.

Bammel, C. P. “Problems of the *Historia monachorum*.” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 47 (1996): 92-104.

Bardy, Gustave. “Apatheia.” *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 1 (1937): 727-746.

———. “Les origines des écoles monastiques en Occident.” *Sacri erudiri* 5 (1953): 86-104.

———. “Les origines des écoles monastiques en Orient.” In *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellincky S.J.*, Museum lessianum, 1: 293-309. Section historique 13. Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot, 1951.

———. “Traducteurs et adapteurs au quatrième siècle.” *Recherches de science religieuse* 30 (1940): 257-306.

Barnes, T. D. “Angel of Light or Mystic Initiate? The Problem of the *Life of Antony*.” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 37 (1986): 353-368.

———. *Athanasius and Constantine: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

———. “Review of Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*.” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 42 (1991): 723-732.

Bartelink, G. J. M. “Les oxymores *desertum civitas* et *desertum floribus vernans*.” *Studia monastica* 15 (1973): 7-15.

Baus, Karl and Eugen Ewig. *Die Reichskirche nach Konstantin dem Grossen. Erster Halbband: Die Kirche von Nikaia bis Chalkedon*. Vol. 2.1 of *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Hubert Jédin. Freiburg: Herder, 1973.

Bertrand, Dominique. “L’Implication du *nous* dans la prière chez Origène et Évagre le Pontique.” In *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg, pp. 355-363. Leuven: University Press, 1999.

Biarne, Jacques. "La bible dans la vie monastique." Chap. 16 in *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Pietri, pp. 409-429. Vol. 2 of *Bible de tous les temps*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1985.

Boak, Arthur E. R. and Herbert C. Youtie. "Flight and Oppression in Fourth-Century Egypt." In *Studi in onore di Aristide Calderini e Roberto Paribeni*. Vol. 2, pp. 325-337. Milan: Casa editrice Ceschina, 1957.

Bostock, Gerald. "The Influence of Origen on Pelagius and Western Monasticism." In *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg, pp. 381-396. Leuven: University Press, 1999.

Bowman, Alan K. *Egypt after the Pharaohs*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

———. "Some Aspects of the Reform of Diocletian." In *Akten des XIII. internationalen Papyrologenkongresses*, ed. Emil Kiessling and Hans-Albert Rupprecht, pp. 43-51. Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagbuchshandlung, 1974.

———. *The Town Councils of Roman Egypt*. American Studies in Papyrology 11. Toronto: A. M. Hakkert, 1971.

Bradley, Denis. "The Transformation of the Stoic Ethic in Clement of Alexandria." *Augustinianum* 14 (1974): 41-66.

Bright, Pamela. "The Combat of Demons in Antony and Origen." In *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert

and U. Kühneweg, pp. 339-343. Leuven: University Press, 1999.

Brown, Peter R. L. "Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy." 151 (1961): 1-11.

———. *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

———. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

———. "Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity: A Parting of the Ways." In *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. Derek Baker, pp. 1-24. Studies in Church History 13. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976.

———. "Late Antiquity." In *A History of Private Life*, ed. Philippe Aries and Georges Duby. Vol. 1, *From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987.

———. *The Making of Late Antiquity*. The Carl Newell Jackson Lectures. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

———. *The Philosopher and Society in Late Antiquity*. Colloquy 34. Berkeley: The Center for Hermeneutical Studies, 1980.

———. "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity." *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80-101.

Bruns, Gerald L. "The Problem of Figuration in Antiquity." In *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, ed. Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica, pp. 147-164. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984.

Bunge, Gabriel. *Akedia. La doctrine spirituelle d'Évagre le Pontique sur Vacédie*. Spiritualité orientale 52. Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1991.

———. "Évagre le Pontique et les deux Macaire." Parts 1-2. *Irenikon* 56 (1983): 215-227, 323-360.

———. *Evagrios Pontikos, Briefe aus der Wüste. Eingeleitet, Übersetzt und Kommentiert von Gabriel Bunge*. Sophia 24. Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1986.

———. *Geistliche Vaterschaft. Christliche Gnosis bei Evagrios Pontikos*. Beiheft zu den Studia patristica et liturgica, no. 23. Regensburg: Kommissionsverlag F. Pustet, 1988.

———. "Origenismus—Gnostizismus: zum geistesgeschichtlichen Standort des Evagrius Pontikos." *Vigiliae Christianae* 40 (1986): 24-54.

———. "Priez sans cesse. Aux origines de la prière hésychaste." *Studia monastica* 30 (1988): 7-16.

———. "The Spiritual Prayer: On the Trinitarian Mysticism of Evagrius of Pontus." *Monastic Studies* 17 (1986): 191-208.

Burton-Christie, Douglas. "'Practice Makes Perfect': Interpretation of Scripture in the *Apophthegmata patrum*." SP

20, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 213-218. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1989.

Burton-Christie, Douglas. "Scripture, Self-Knowledge and Contemplation in Cassian's *Conferences*." SP 25, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 339-345. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1993.

———. *The Word and the Desert. Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Butler, Cuthbert. *The Lausiac History of Palladius. A Critical Discussion together with Notes on Early Egyptian Monachism*. 2 Vols. Texts and Studies, 6.1-2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898, 1904.

Byrne, Richard. "The Cenobitic Life: A Digression in Jerome's Letter Twenty-two to Eustochium." *Downside Review* 105 (1987): 272-293.

———. "Cassian and the Goals of the Monastic Life." *Cistercian Studies* 22 (1987): 3-16.

Cahill, Michael. "Reader-Response Criticism and the Allegorizing Reader." *Theological Studies* 57 (1996): 89-96.

Camelot, P. T. "Un guide de lecture pour Jean Cassien." *La vie spirituelle* 102 (1960): 89-99.

Chadwick, Henry. "The Ascetic Ideal in the History of the Church." In *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, ed. W.

J. Shiels, pp. 1-23. *Studies in Church History*, no. 22. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985.

———. “The *Sentences* of Sextus and of the Pythagoreans.” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 11 (1960): 349.

Chadwick, Nora K. *Poetry and Letters in Early Christian Gaul*. London: Bowes and Bowes, 1955.

Chadwick, Owen. “Euladius of Arles.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 46 (1945): 200-205.

———. *John Cassian. A Study in Primitive Monasticism*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968. (1st ed., 1950).

Chitty, Derwas J. *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966.

Christophe, Paul. *Cassien et Césaire, prédicateurs de la morale monastique*. Recherches et synthèses. Section de Morale. Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1969.

Clark, Elizabeth A. *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

———. *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Coleman-Norton, Paul R. "The Use of Dialogue in the *Vitae sanctorum*." *Journal of Theological Studies* 27 (1925-26): 388-395.

Colish, Marcia L. *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*. 2 vols. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985.

Constable, Giles. "The Study of Monastic History Today." In *Essays on the Reconstruction of Medieval History*, ed. Vaclav Mudroch and G. S. Couse, pp. 21-51. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974.

Courcelle, Pierre. *Connai-toi toi-même: De socrate a saint Bernard*. 3 vols. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1974-75.

———. "Nouveaux aspects de la culture lérinienne." *Revue des Études latines* 46 (1968): 379-409.

———. *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*. Paris: E. de Boccard, 1950.

Courtois, Christian. "L'évolution du monachisme en Gaule de St. Martin à St. Columban." In *II monachesimo nell'Alto Medioevo e la formazione della civiltà occidentale*, pp. 47-72. Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, no. 4. Spoleto: Presso la sede del centro, 1957.

Cox, Patricia L. *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage, no. 5. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

———. (Patricia Cox Miller). “The Blazing Body: Ascetic Desire in Jerome’s Letter to Eustochium.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 21-45.

Crouzel, Henri. *Origen*. Trans. A. S. Worall. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1989.

———. *Origene et la “connaissance mystique.”*³³ Museum Lessianum. Section théologique, no. 56. [Bruges]: Desclée de Brouwer, [1961].

Damian, Theodore. “Some Critical Considerations and New Arguments Reviewing the Problem of St. John Cassian’s Birthplace.” *The Patristic and Byzantine Review* 9 (1990): 149-170.

Davidson, Arnold. “Spiritual Exercise and Ancient Philosophy: An Introduction to Pierre Hadot.” *Critical Inquiry* 16 (1990): 475-482.

Dawson, David. *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992.

———. *Literary Theory*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

Dechow, Jon F. *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen*. North American Patristic Society Monograph Series, vol. 13. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988.

De Clerq, Charles. “L’influence de la règle de saint Pachôme en Occident.” In *Mélanges d’histoire du moyen âge, dédiés à*

le mémoire de Louis Halphen, ed. C.-E. Perrin, pp. 169-176. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1951.

De Lubac, Henri. *The Four Senses of Scripture*. Vol. 1 of *Medieval Exegesis*. Trans. Marc Sebanc. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998.

Devos, Paul. "Saint Jean Cassien et saint Moïse l'Ethiopien." *Analecta Bollandiana* 103 (1985): 61-74.

Doignon, Jean. "Les premiers commentateurs latins de l'Ecriture et l'oeuvre exégétique d'Hilaire de Poitiers." Chap. 21 in *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Pietri, pp. 509-521. Vol. 2 of *Bible de tous les temps*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1985.

Drewery, B. "History and Doctrine: Heresy and Schism." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 23 (1972): 251-266.

Driscoll, Jeremy. *The 'Ad monachos' of Evagrius Ponticus: Its Structure and a Select Commentary*. Studia Anselmiana, fasc. 104. Rome: Pontificio Ateneo s. Anselmo, 1991.

———. "Gentleness in the *Ad monachos* of Evagrius Ponticus." *Studia monastica* 32 (1990): 297-321.

———. "A Key for Reading the *Ad monachos* of Evagrius Ponticus." *Augustinianum* 30 (1990): 361-392.

Driver, Steven D. "The Development of Jerome's Views on the Ascetic Life." *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 62 (1995): 44-70.

———. “From Palestinian Ignorance to Egyptian Wisdom: Jerome and Cassian on the Monastic Life.” *American Benedictine Review* 48 (1997): 293-315.

Duchesne, Lucien. *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*. 2nd ed. 3 vols. Paris: Albert Fontemoing, 1907-1915.

Elm, Susanna. “The Polemical Use of Genealogies: Jerome’s Classification of Pelagius and Evagrius Ponticus.” SP 33, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 311-318. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1997.

———. “The *Sententiae ad virginem* by Evagrius Ponticus and the Problem of Early Monastic Rules.” *Augustinianum* 30 (1990): 393-404.

———. *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

Evans, Robert F. *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals*. New York: Seabury Press, 1968.

Fagerberg, David W. “Time in the Desert Fathers.” *American Benedictine Review* 50 (1999): 180-202.

Favez, Charles. “St. Jérôme peint par lui-même.” Parts 1-3. *Latomus* 16 (1957): 655-671; 17 (1958): 81-96, 303-316.

Fedwick, Paul J. “The Translations of the Works of Basil before 1400.” In *Basil of Caesarea: Humanist, Christian, Ascetic. A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium*, ed. Paul J. Fedwick, vol. 2, pp. 439-512. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981.

Ferguson, John. *Pelagius: A Historical and Theological Study*. Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1956.

Fish, Stanley. *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Folsom, Cassian. "Anger, Dejection and Acedia in the Writings of John Cassian." *American Benedictine Review* 35 (1984): 219-248.

Fontaine, Jacques. "L'ascétisme chrétien dans la littérature gallo-romaine d'Hilaire à Cassien." In *La Gallia Romana: Atti del Colloquio sul tema*, pp. 89-115. Rome: Academia nazionale dei Lincei, 1973.

Frank, K. Suso. "Fiktive Mündlichkeit als der Grundstruktur der monastischen Literatur." SP 25, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 356-375. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1993.

———. "John Cassian on John Cassian." SP 30, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 418-33. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1996.

Frend, W. H. C. "Paulinus of Nola and the Last Century of the Western Empire." *Journal of Roman Studies* 59 (1969): 1-11.

Frohnhofen, Herbert. *Apatheia tou theou: Über die Affektlosigkeit Gottes in der griechischen Antike und bei den griechischsprachigen Kirchenvätern bis zu Gregorios Thaumaturgos*. Europäische Hochschulschriften: Reihe 23. Theology 318. Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1987.

Fuhrmann, Manfred. "Die Mönchsgeschichten des Hieronymus. Formexperimente in erzählender Literatur." In *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'antiquité tardive en occident*, ed. Manfred Fuhrmann, pp. 69-82. Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 23. Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1976.

Gamble, Harry Y. *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995.

Gams, P. Pius Bonifacius. *Series episcoporum ecclesiae catholicae*. Leipzig: Verlag Karl W. Hiersemann, 1931.

Garrigues, Jean-Miguel and J. Legrez. *Moines dans l'assemblée des fidèles à l'époque des pères (IVe-VIIIe siècle)*. Théologie historique 87. Paris: Beauchesne, 1990.

Glorie, F. "La culture lérinienne. Notes de lecture." *Sacris erudiri* 19 (1969): 71-76.

Goehring, James A. *Ascetics, Society and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism*. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.

———. "The Encroaching Desert: Literary Production and Ascetic Space in Early Christian Egypt." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 281-296.

———. "Through a Glass Darkly: Diverse Images of the APOTAKTIKOI(AI) of Early Egyptian Monasticism." In *Discursive Formations, Ascetic Piety and the Interpretation*

of *Early Christian Literature*, Pt. 2, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush. *Semeia* 58 (1992): 25-45.

———. “The World Engaged: The Social and Economic World of Early Egyptian Monasticism.” In *Gnosticism and the Early Christian World*, ed. James E. Goehring et al., pp. 134-144. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1990.

Gould, Graham. “A Note on the *Apophthegmata patrum*.” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 37 (1986): 133-138.

———. *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

———. “Moving on and Staying put in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.” SP 20, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 231-237. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1989.

Grant, Robert M. with Tracy, David. *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Gribomont, Jean. “Le origini.” In “Preghiera. I. Nel monacheSimo orientale.” *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* 7 (1983): 582-591.

———. “Review of Garitte, Les lettres.” *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 51 (1956): 546-550.

———. *Saint Basile, Evangile et Eglise: Mélanges*. Spiritualité orientale 36-37. Bérgrollesen-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1984.

Griffe, Elie. "Cassien a-t-il été prêtre d'Antioche?" *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 55 (1954): 240-244.

———. *La Gaule chrétienne à l'époque romaine*. Vol. 2 of *L'église des Gaules au Ve siècle*. 2nd ed. Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1966.

———. "Saint Martin et le monachisme gaulois." In *Saint Martin et son temps. Mémorial du XVIe centenaire des débuts du monachisme en Gaule*, 361-1961. Studia Anselmiana, fase. 46, pp. 3-24. Rome: Pontificium Institutum s. Anselmi, 1961.

Griggs, C. Wilfred. *Early Egyptian Christianity: From Its Origins to 451 C.E.* Coptic Studies 2. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990.

Guillaumont, Antoine. "La conception du désert chez les moines d'Égypte." *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 188 (1975): 3-21.

———. "Èvagre et les anathématismes antiorigénistes de 553." *SP* 3, ed. F. L. Cross, pp. 219-226. *TU* 78. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961.

———. *Les "Kephalalaia gnostica" d'Èvagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'Origenisme chez les grecs et les syriens*. *Patristica Sorbonensia*, no. 5. Paris: du Seuil, 1962.

———. "Un philosophe au désert: Èvagre le Pontique." *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 181 (1972): 29-57.

———. "La *preghiera pura* di Evagrio e l'influsso del Neoplatonismo." In "Preghiera. I. Nel monacheSimo

orientale.” *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* 7 (1983): 591-595.

Guillaumont, Antoine and Claire Guillaumont. “évagre le Pontique.” *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité A.2* (1961): 1731-1744.

Guy, Jean-Claude. “Educational Innovation in the Desert Fathers.” *Eastern Churches Review* 6 (1974): 44-51.

———. “Jean Cassien, historien du monachisme égyptien?” SP 8, ed. F. L. Cross, pp. 363-372. TU 93. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966.

———. *Jean Cassien: Vie et doctrine spirituelle*. Collection théologie, pastorale et spiritualité. Recherches et synthèses, no. 9. Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1961.

———. “Le centre monastique de Scété dans la littérature du Ve siècle.” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 39 (1964): 129-147.

———. “Note sur l’évolution du genre apophthégmatic.” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 32 (1956): 63-68.

———. “La place du *contemptus mundi* dans la monachisme ancien.” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 41 (1965): 237-249.

———. “Remarques sur le texte des *Apophthegmata patrum*.” *Recherches de science religieuse* 43 (1955): 252-258.

———. “La tradition manuscrite des *Apophthegmata Patrum*. Etat présent des recherches.” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 61 (1965): 113-124.

Haag, Modestus. “A Precarious Balance: Flesh and Spirit in Cassian’s Works.” *American Benedictine Review* 19 (1968): 180-192.

Hadot, I. “The Spiritual Guide.” Trans. Margaret Kirby. In *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, pp. 436-459. Vol. 15 of *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*. New York: Crossroad, 1986.

Hadot, Pierre. *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*. Deuxième édition revue et augmentée. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1987.

———. *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. Trans. Michael Chase. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

———. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Trans. Michael Chase. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

Hankinson, James. “Actions and Passions: Affection, Emotion and Moral Self-Management in Galen’s Philosophical Psychology.” In *Passions and Perceptions: Studies in Hellenistic Philosophy of the Mind. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. Jacques Brunschwig and Martha Nussbaum, pp. 184-222. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Hardy, Edward R. *Christian Egypt: Church and People. Christianity and Nationalism in the Patriarchate of Alexandria*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Harper, J. "John Cassian and Sulpicius Severus." *Church History* 34 (1965): 371-380.

Hausherr, Irénée. *Les leçons d'un contemplatif. Le traité de l'Oraison d'Évagre le Pontique*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1960.

———. [G. Lemaitre, pseud.], ed. *Théologie de la vie monastique. Etudes sur la tradition patristique*. Collection théologie: Etudes publiées sous la direction de la faculté de théologie s. j. de Lyon-Fouvière, tm. 49. Paris: Aubier, 1961.

Holze, Heinrich. "Die Bedeutung der experientia in der monastichen Theologie Johannes Cassians." SP 20, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 256-263. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1987.

Hunt, E. D. *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire: A.D. 312-460*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

Husson, Genevieve. "L'habitat monastique en Egypte à la lumière des papyrus Grecs, des textes chrétiens et de l'archéologie." In *Hommages a la mémoire de Serge Sauneron 1927-1976*. Vol. 2, *Egypte postpharaonique*. Bibliothèque d'étude, tm. 82, pp. 191-207. Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1979.

Irvine, Martin. *The Making of a Textual Culture: 'Grammatica'³ and Literary Theory, 350-1100*. Cambridge

Studies in Medieval Literature 19. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

———. *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Jaffé, Philip, ed. *Regesta pontificum romanorum ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII*. 2nd ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach et al. Leipzig: Viet et comp., 1885-1888.

Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Theory and History of Literature, vol. 2. Trans. Timothy Bahti. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Joest, Christoph. "Die Bedeutung von Akedia und Apatheia dei Evagrios Pontikos." *Studia monastica* 35 (1993): 7-53.

Judge, Edwin A. "The Earliest Use of Monachos for Monk and the Origins of Monasticism." *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20 (1977): 72-89.

———. "Fourth-Century Monasticism in the Papyri." In *Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Congress of Papyrology*, ed. Roger Bagnall et al., pp. 613-620. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.

—— and S. R. Pickering. “Papyrus Documentation of Church and Community in Egypt to the Mid-Fourth Century.” *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20 (1977): 47-71.

Kardong, Terrence. “Aiming for the Mark: Cassian’s Metaphor for the Monastic Quest.” *Cistercian Studies* 22 (1987): 213-220.

——. “John Cassian’s Evaluation of Monastic Practices.” *American Benedictine Review* 43 (1992): 82-105.

——. “John Cassian’s Teaching on Perfect Charity.” *American Benedictine Review* 30 (1979) : 249-263.

Katz, Stephen. “Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism.” In *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Stephen Katz, pp. 22-74. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Kelly, J. F. “Eucherius of Lyons: Harbinger of the Middle Ages.” SP 23, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 138-142. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1987.

——. “The Gallic Resistance to Eastern Monasticism.” In SP 17, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 506-510. New York: Pergamon Press, 1982.

Kelly, J. N. D. *Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies*. London: Duckworth, 1975.

Kirschner, Robert. “The Vocation of Holiness in Late Antiquity.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984): 105-124.

Klijn, A. F. J. "Jewish Christianity in Egypt." In *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring, pp. 161-175. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

Kovacs, Judith L. "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 3-25.

Kozik, I. "Introduction." In *The First Desert Hero: St. Jerome's Vita Pauli*, ed. B. Peebles. New York: King Lithographers, 1968.

Kristensen, A. "Cassian's Use of Scripture." *American Benedictine Review* 28 (1977): 276-288.

Laird, Martin S. "Cassian's Conferences Nine and Ten: Some Observations Regarding Contemplation and Hermeneutics." *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 62 (1995): 145-156.

Leclerc, P. "Antoine et Paul: métamorphose d'un héros." In *Jérôme entre l'occident et l'orient: XVI^e centenaire du départ de saint Jérôme de Rome et de son installation à Bethléem*, ed. Yves-Marie Duval, pp. 257-265. Actes du Colloque de Chantilly (Septembre 1986). Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1988.

Leclercq, Jean. *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu. Initiation aux auteurs monastiques du Moyen Age*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1957.

Ledegang, Fred. "Anthropomorphites and Origenists in Egypt at the End of the Fourth Century." In *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg, pp. 375-379. Leuven: University Press, 1999.

Leloir, Louis. "La 'lectio divina'." Chap. 7 in *Désert et communion. Témoignage des Pères du Désert, recueillis à partir des Paterica' arméniens*. Spiritualité orientale 26, pp. 237-284. Bérolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1978.

———. "La lecture de l'Écriture selon les anciens Pères." *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 47 (1971): 183-199.

———. "Les pères du désert et la Bible." *La vie spirituelle* 140 (1986): 167-181.

Leroy, Julien. "Le cénobitisme chez Cassien." *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 43 (1967): 121-158.

———. "Experience of God and Primitive Cenobitism." *Monastic Studies* 9 (1973): 59-81.

———. "Les préfaces des écrits monastiques de Jean Cassien." *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 42 (1966): 157-180.

Lewis, Naphtali. *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Lienhard, Joseph T. *Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism. With a Study of the Chronology of His Works and an Annotated Bibliography*. Theophania, Beitrage zur

Religions-und Kirchengeschichte des Altertums, bd. 28. Köln: P. Hanstein, 1977.

Lloyd, A. C. "Emotion and Decison in Stoic Psychology." In *The Stoics*, ed. John M. Rist, pp. 233-246. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978.

Long, A. A. "Dialectic and the Stoic Sage." In *The Stoics*, ed. John M. Rist, pp. 101-124. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978.

Lorenz, Rudolf. "Die Anfänge des abendländischen Mönchtums im 4. Jahrhundert." *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 77 (1966): 1-61.

Lorié, L. *Spiritual Terminology in the Latin Translation of the "Vita Antonii"*³³ *with Reference to Fourth and Fifth Century Monastic Literature*. Latinitas Christianorum primaeva, no. 11. Nijmegen: Dekker and van de Begt, 1955.

Louth, Andrew. *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

———. "Messalianism and Pelagianism." SP 17, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 127-135. New York: Pergamon Press, 1978.

———. "Mysticism." In *Early Christianity: Origins and Evolution to AD 600: In Honour of W. H. C. Frend*, ed. Ian Hazlett, pp. 208-217. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

———. "St. Athanasius and the Greek *Life of Antony*." *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 39 (1988): 504-509.

Macleod, Colin. "Allegory and Mysticism in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa." *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 22 (1971): 362-79.

Macqueen, D. J. "John Cassian on Grace and Free Will. With Particular Reference to *Institutio* XII and *Conlatio* XIII." *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 44 (1977): 5-28.

Main, John. "Prayer in the Tradition of John Cassian." Parts 1-3. *Cistercian Studies* 12 (1977): 184-190, 272-281; 13 (1978): 75-83.

Markus, Robert A. *The End of Ancient Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Marrou, Henri-Irénée. "Le fondateur de Saint-Victor de Marseille: Jean Cassien." *Provence Historique* 16 (1966): 297-308.

———. "Jean Cassien à Marseilles." *Revue du moyen âge latin* 1 (1945): 5-26.

———. "La patrie de Jean Cassien." *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 13 (1947): 588-596.

Marsili, Salvatore. *Giovanni Cassiano ed Evagrio Pontico, dottrina sulla carità e contemplazione*. Studia Anselmiana philosophica theologica, fasc. 5. Rome: Herder, 1936.

Marx, Michael J. "Incessant Prayer in the *Vita Antonii*." In *Antonius Magnus Eremita 356-1956. Studia ad antiquum monachismum spectantia*, ed. Basil Steidle, pp. 108-135.

Studia Anselmiana, fasc. 38. Rome: Pontificium Institutum s. Anselmi, 1956.

McClure, J. "Handbooks against Heresy in the West, from the Late Fourth to the Late Sixth Centuries." *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 30 (1979): 186-197.

McGinn, Bernard. *The Foundations of Mysticism*. Vol. 1 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*. New York: Crossroad, 1991.

Meyer, Robert T. "*Lectio divina* in Palladius." In *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. Patrick Granfield and Josef Jungmann, pp. 580-584. Münster: Aschendorff, 1970.

———. "Palladius and Early Christian Spirituality." In SP 10.1, ed. F. L. Cross, pp. 379-390. TU 107. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970.

———. "Palladius and the Study of Scripture." In SP 13.2, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 487-490. TU 116. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975.

Miquel, Pierre. *Lexique du désert: Etude de quelques mots-clés du vocabulaire monastique grec ancien*. Spiritualité orientale 44. Bégnolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1986.

———. *Le vocabulaire de l'expérience spirituelle dans la tradition patristique grecque du IV^e au XIV^e siècle*. Théologie historique 86. Paris: Beauchesne, 1991.

———. *Le vocabulaire latin de Inexpérience spirituelle dans la tradition monastique et canoniale de 1050 à 1250*. Théologie historique 79. Paris: Beauchesne, 1989.

Misch, Georg. *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*. Trans. Ernest Walter Dickes. 2 Vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950.

Mitsis, Phillip. "Seneca on Reason, Rules and Moral Development." In *Passions and Perceptions: Studies in Hellenistic Philosophy of the Mind. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. Jacques Brunschwig and Martha Nussbaum, pp. 285-312. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Morard, Françoise. "Encore quelques réflexions sur monachos." *Vigiliae Christianae* 34 (1980) : 395-401.

———. "Monachos, Moine: Histoire du terme grec jusqu'au IV^e siècle." *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 20 (1973): 332-411.

Morin, Germain. "Pour l'authenticité de la lettre de S. Jérôme à Présidius." *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétiennes* 3 (1913): 52-60.

Mühmelt, M. "Zu der neuen lateinischen Übersetzung des Mönchspiegels des Evagrius." *Vigiliae Christianas* 8 (1954): 101-103.

Munz, Peter. "John Cassian." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 11 (1960): 1-22.

Murphy, Francis X. "Evagrius Ponticus and Origenism." In *Origeniana Tertia: The Third International Colloquium for Origen Studies, University of Manchester, September 7th-11th, 1981*, ed. Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel, pp. 253-269. Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985.

———. "Rufinus of Aquileia and Paulinus of Nola." *Revue des Études augustiniennes* 2 (1956): 79-91.

Nautin, Pierre. "Études de chronologie hiéronymienne (393-397)." Parts 1-4. *Revue des Études augustiniennes* 18 (1972): 209-218; 19 (1973): 69-86, 213-239; 20 (1974): 251-284.

Nussbaum, Martha. "Poetry and the Passions: Two Stoic Views." In *Passions and Perceptions: Studies in Hellenistic Philosophy of the Mind. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. Jacques Brunschwig and Martha Nussbaum, pp. 97-145. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

———. *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

O'Laughlin, Michael. "Closing the Gap between Antony and Evagrius." In *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kiihneweg, pp. 345-354. Leuven: University Press, 1999.

———. “The Bible, the Demons and the Desert: Evaluating the *Antirrheticus* of Evagrius Ponticus.” *Studia monastica* 34 (1992): 201-215.

———. “Origenism in the Desert: Anthropology and Integration in Evagrius Ponticus.” Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1987.

Olphe-Galliard, M. “Débat à propos de Cassien.” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 17 (1936) : 181-191.

———. “La pureté de coeur d’après Cassien.” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 17 (1936): 28-60.

———. “La science spirituelle d’après Cassien.” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 18 (1937) : 141-160.

———. “Vie contemplative et vie active d’après Cassien.” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 16 (1935): 252-288.

Ong, Walter. *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977.

———. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Methuen, 1982.

O’Meara, John J. “Augustine’s Confessions: Elements of Fiction.” In *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. Joanne MacWilliam, pp. 77-95. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1992.

O'Neill, J. C. "The Origins of Monasticism." In *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams, pp. 270-287. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Parmentier, M. "Evagrius of Pontus' 'Letter to Melania' I." *Bijdragen, tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 46 (1985): 2-38.

Pearson, Birger A. "The Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Some Observations." In *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring, pp. 132-159. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

Poulet, Georges. "Phenomenology of Reading." *New Literary History* 1 (1969-70): 53-68.

Pricoco, S. *L'isola dei santi: il cenobio di Lerino e le origini del monacheSimo gallico*. Filologia e critica, no. 23. Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo e Bizzarri, 1978.

———. *Monaci filosofie santi: saggi di storia della cultura tardoantica*. Armarium: Biblioteca di storia e cultura religiosa 1. Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1992.

Prince, Gerald. *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative*. New York: Mouton Publishers, 1982.

Pristas, Lauren. "The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian." Ph.D. diss., Boston College, 1993.

Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire. Vol. 1, A. D. 260-395. Ed. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris. Voi. 2, A.D. 395-527. Ed. J. R. Martindale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971, 1980.

Puthiadam, Ignatius. "Evagrius on Prayer." In *Prayer and Contemplation*, ed. C. M. Vadakkekara, pp. 27-55. Studies in Christian and Hindu Spirituality 1. Bangalore: Asirvanam Benedictine Monastery, 1980.

Raasch, Juana. "The Monastic Concept of Purity of Heart and Its Sources." Parts 1-5. *Studia Monastica* 8 (1966): 7-33, 183-213; 10 (1968): 7-55; 11 (1969): 269-314; 12 (1970): 7-41.

Ramsey, Boniface. "John Cassian: Student of Augustine." *Cistercian Studies* 28 (1993): 5-15.

Ramsey, trans. *John Cassian: The Conferences*. Ancient Christian Writers, no. 57. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997.

———. *John Cassian: The Institutes*. Ancient Christian Writers, no. 58. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997.

Regnault, Lucien. *La vie quotidienne des Pères du désert en Egypte au IVe siècle*. Paris: Hachette, 1990.

———. *Les Pères du désert a travers leurs apophthegmes*. Sable-sur-Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierrs de Solesmes, 1987.

Regnault, trans. *Les Sentences des Péres du désert. Troisième recueil et tables*. Sablé-sur-Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierrs de Solesmes, 1976.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Oneself as Another*. Trans. Kathleen Blarney. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

———. “The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text.” In *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Rippinger, Joel. “The Concept of Obedience in the Monastic Writings of Basil and Cassian.” *Studia Monastica* 19 (1977): 7-18.

Rist, John M. “The Stoic Concept of Detachment.” In *The Stoics*, ed. John M. Rist, pp. 259-272. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978.

Roberts, Colin H. *Manuscript Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt*. The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy. London: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Rondeau, Marie-Joseph. *Les commentaires patristique du psautier (IIIe-Ve siecles)*. Vol. 2 of Exegese prosopologique et theologie. Orientalia Christiana Analecta 220. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1985.

———. “L’epitre a Marcellinus sur les Psaumes.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 22 (1968): 176-197.

Rousseau, Philip. *Ascetics, Authority and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

———. “Cassian, Contemplation and the Cenobitic Life.” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 26 (1975): 113-126.

———. “Christian Asceticism and the Early Monks.” In *Early Christianity: Origins and Evolution to AD 600: In Honour of W. H. C. Frend*, ed. Ian Hazlett, pp. 112-122. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

———. *Pachomius. The Making of a Community in Fourth Century Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

———. “The Spiritual Authority of the ‘Monk-Bishop’: Eastern Elements in Some Western Hagiography of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries.” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 22 (1971): 380-419.

Rubenson, Samuel. *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint*. Bibliotheca historico-ecclesiastica Ludensis, no. 24. Lund: Lund University Press, 1990.

———. “Origen in the Egyptian Monastic Tradition of the Fourth Century.” In *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg, pp. 319-337. Leuven: University Press, 1999.

Ruppert, Fidelis. “*Meditatio-Ruminatio*. Zu einem Grundbegriff christlicher Meditation.” *Erbe und Auftrag* 53 (1977): 83-93.

Schwarz, Eduard. "Die Lebensdaten Cassians." *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 38 (1939): 1-10.

Scott, Jamie. "From Literal Self-Sacrifice to Literary Self-Sacrifice: Augustine's *Confessions* and the Rhetoric of Testimony." In *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. Joanne MacWilliam, pp. 31-49. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1992.

Shklovsky, Viktor. "Art as Device." In *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher, pp. 1-14. Elmwood Park, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1990.

Sillem, Aelred. "A New Study of Cassian." *Downside Review* 69 (1951): 333-347.

Le site monastique des Kellia (Basse-Egypte): Recherches des années 1981-1983. Mission Suisse d'archéologie copte de l'Université de Genève sous la direction de Rudolphe Kasser. Louvain: Peeters, 1984.

Simonetti, Manlio. *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis.* Trans. by John A. Hughes. Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1994.

Sivan, Hagith. "Holy Land Pilgrimage and Western Audiences: Some Reflections on Egeria and Her Circle." *Classical Quarterly*, n.s., 38 (1988): 528-535.

———. "Who Was Egeria? Piety and Pilgrimage in the Age of Gratian." *Harvard Theological Review* 81 (1988): 59-72.

Smallwood, E. Mary. *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976.

Smith, William and Henry Wace, eds. *Dictionary of Christian Biography*. 4 vols. London: John Murray, 1877.

Somos, Robert. "Origen, Evagrius and the Ideal of Impassibility." In *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kiihneweg, pp. 365-373. Leuven: University Press, 1999.

Spidlik, Tomas. *The Spirituality of the Christian East: A Systematic Handbook*. Trans. Anthony P. Gythiel. Cistercian Studies Series, no. 79. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1986.

Stancliffe, C. *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Stewart, Columba. *Cassian the Monk*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

———. "Imageless Prayer and the Theological Vision of Evagrius Ponticus." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 173-204.

———. "John Cassian on Unceasing Prayer." *Monastic Studies* 15 (1984): 159-177.

———. "Scripture and Contemplation in the Monastic Spiritual Theology of John Cassian." SP 25, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 457-461. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1993.

Stock, Brian. *Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-knowledge and the Ethics of Interpretation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.

———. *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

Straw, Carole E. *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage, no. 14. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Taft, Robert. *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning Today*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986.

Thesaurus Iohannis Cassiani. Thesaurus patrum latinorum, ser. A. Introduction by Paul Trombeur. Turnhout: Brepols, 1992.

Torjeson, Karen Jo. *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis*. Patristische Texte und Studien 28. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985.

———. “The Rhetoric of the Literal Sense: Changing Strategies of Persuasion from Origen to Jerome.” In *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg, pp. 633-644. Leuven: University Press, 1999.

Trigg, Joseph W. “God’s Marvelous Oikonomia: Reflections on Origen’s Understanding of Divine and Human Pedagogy

in the *Address Ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus*.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 27-52.

———. *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1983.

Trout, Dennis E. “*Amicitia, Auctoritas, and Self-Fashioning Texts: Paulinus of Nola and Sulpicius Severus*.” SP 28, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 123-129. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1993.

Turner, Eric G. “Scribes and Scholars of Oxyrhynchus.” In *Akten des VIII. internationalen Kongresses für Papyrologie*, ed. Hans Gerstinger, pp. 141-146. Vienne: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag, 1956.

Van Andel, G. K. “Sulpicius Severus and Origenism.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 34 (1980): 278-287.

Van Dam, Raymond. “Images of Saint Martin in Late Roman and Early Merovingian Gaul.” *Viator* 19 (1988): 1-27.

Van Fleteren, Frederick. “Augustine’s Principles of Biblical Exegesis, *De doctrina Christiana* Aside: Miscellaneous Observations.” *Augustinian Studies* 27.2 (1996): 109-130.

Veilleux, Armand. “The Abbatial Office in Cenobitic Life.” *Monastic Studies* 6 (1988): 3-45.

———. “Holy Scripture in the Pachomian Koinonia.” *Monastic Studies* 10 (1974): 143-153.

Vessey, Mark. "Ideas of Christian Writing in Late Roman Gaul." D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1988.

———. "Jerome's Origen: The Making of a Christian Literary *Persona*." SP 28, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 135-145. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1993.

Vogüé, Adalbert de. "Les deux fonctions de la méditation dans les règles monastiques anciennes." *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité* 51 (1975): 3-16.

———. "Une interpolation inspirée de Cassien dans un texte monastique de Césaire d'Arles." *Studia monastica* 25 (1983): 217-221.

Vogüé, Adalbert de. "Monachisme et église dans la pensée de Cassien. Études sur la vie monastique." In *Théologie de la vie monastique: Etudes sur la Tradition patristique*, pp. 213-240. Théologie 49. [Paris]: Aubier, 1961.

———. *Le monachisme latin de la mort d'Antoine à la fin du séjour de Jérôme à Rome. Vol. 1 of Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991.

———. "Un morceau célèbre de Cassien parmi des extraits d'Evagre." *Studia monastica* 27 (1985): 7-12.

———. "Pour comprendre Cassien. Un survol des conférences." *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 39 (1977): 250-272.

———. "Pour lire les anciens moines." *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 37 (1975): 93-113.

———. “The *Regula orientalis* in the context of the Rules of the Fathers at Lérins.” *Monastic Studies* 13 (1982): 39-45.

———. “Les sources de quatre premiers livres des Institutions de Jean Cassien. Introduction aux recherches sur les anciennes règles monastiques.” *Studia monastica* 27 (1985): 241-312.

Walker, Peter W. L. “Eusebius, Cyril and the Holy Places.” SP 20, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 306-314. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1989.

Ward, Graham. “*Allegoria*: Reading as a Spiritual Exercise.” *Modern Theology* 15.3 (1999): 271-295.

Ware, Kallistos T. “The Meaning of *Pathos* in Abba Isaias and Theodoret of Cyrus.” SP 20, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, pp. 315-322. Leuven: Peeters Press, 1987.

———. “Tray without Ceasing’: The Ideal of Continual Prayer in Eastern Monasticism.” *Eastern Churches Review* 2 (1968-69): 253-261.

Weber, H. O. *Die Stellung des Johannes Cassianus zur ausserpachomianischen Mönchstradition*. Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens, heft 24. Münster-Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961.

Wickham, Lionel. “Pelagianism in the East.” In *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams, pp. 200-213. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Widnmann, Ildefons. “*Discretio (diakrisis)*. Zur Bedeutungsgeschichte.” *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner-Ordens und seiner Zweige* 58 (1940): 21-28.

Wipszycka, Ewa. “Le monachisme égyptien et les villes.” *Travaux et mémoires* 12 (1994): 1-44.

Worthen, Jeremy F. “The Self in the Text: Guigo I the Carthusian, William of St. Thierry and Hugh of St. Victor.” Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1992.

Xenakis, Iason. *Epictetus: Philosopher-Therapist*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969.

Young, Robin Darling. “Evagrius the Iconographer: Monastic Pedagogy in the *Gnostikos*.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 53-71.

Zanetti, Ugo. “Les *Lettres* de saint Antoine et la naissance du monachisme.” *Nouvelle revue théologique* 113 (1991): 87-93.

Zumkeller, Adolar. *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*. Trans. Edmund Colledge. New York: Fordham University Press, 1986.

Index

A

Alexander, bishop of Antioch, [14](#), [17](#)

Alexandria, [21](#), [24](#), [25](#), [27](#), [29](#), [31](#), [46](#)

anachoresis:

civil context, [25](#)

equated with solitude, [5](#), [13](#), [21](#), [45](#), [46](#), [48](#), [49](#), [52](#), [67](#), [70](#), [76](#), [91](#)

in the *Conferences*, [98-100](#)

in the *Institutes*, [93-97](#)

traditional view challenged by Cassian, [91-103](#)

understood as an act of reading, [112-115](#)

understood as interiority, [92-93](#), [101-103](#), [107-109](#)

Anastasius, bishop of Rome, [5](#), 158

anthropomorphic controversy, [13](#), [16](#), [37](#), [117](#)

Antoninus, [27](#)

Antony of Egypt:

anthropology, [31-33](#), [109](#)

ascesis, [32](#), [46](#)

biography, [24](#), [33](#), [46](#)

Christology, [32](#)

importance in the West, [23](#), [50](#), [51](#)

knowledge of God, [31-33](#)

Letters, see *Letters of Antony*

Life, see *Life of Antony*

portrayal by Cassian, [76](#), [91](#), [92](#), [109](#)

self-knowledge, [32-34](#)

apatheia, [55-58](#), [80](#), [113](#), [117](#)

Apollo, *abba*, [29-30](#)

Apophthegmata, [5](#), [30](#), [33-35](#), [37](#), [65](#), [117](#)

apotaktikoi(ai), [29](#)

ascesis:

Antony's understanding of, [32](#), [109](#)

Cassian's understanding of, [109](#), [117](#)

Origen's understanding of, [109](#)

see also praxis

Asella, [50-51](#)

Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria:

author of *Life of Antony*, [46-48](#)

place in monastic history, [22-24](#)

understanding of Psalmody, [8](#), [85-86](#), [114](#)

see also Letter to Marcellinus; Life of

Antony

Augustine:

and the *Confessions*, [7](#), [51](#)

Jerome's influence on, [58](#)

Augustus, [25](#), [26](#)

B

Bagnall, R., [25-26](#)

Bartelink, G., [52](#)

Bethlehem, [12](#)

Boak, A., [26](#)

Bohlin, T., [55](#)

Bonosus, [48-50](#)

boulai, [25](#)

Briccius, bishop of Tours, [18](#)

Bunge, G., [38](#)

Burton-Christie, D., [117](#)

Butler, C., [2](#)

C

Cassian, John:

anthropology, [79](#), [81](#), [101](#), [102](#), [108](#), [109](#), [113](#)

biography, [6-7](#), [12-14](#)

Christology, [101](#), [102](#), [110](#), [111](#), [114](#), [115-118](#)

commission, [4](#)

influence of Evagrius, [11](#), [12](#), [15](#), [16](#), [83](#), [117](#)

influence of Origen, [7](#), [11](#), [12](#), [83](#), [84](#), [108](#), [109](#), [114-118](#)

intended audience, [5](#), [11](#), [67](#), [74](#), [78](#), [92](#), [94](#), [100](#)

knowledge of God, 114-117

reading the *Institutes*, 72-84

renunciation, 68, 75, 82, 92, 98, 107, 118 n. 21

self-knowledge, 33, 68-76, 79, 84-86, 112-117

supposed disorganization of text, 3

task as author, 5, 12, 38, 66, 69, 82

use of autobiography, 6, 86

use of dialogue, 65-67, 70, 77, 78

use of *exempla*, 82-84

use of narrative, 67-70

see also prayer; reading

Castor, bishop of Apt, 1, 13

cenobitism:

origins, 21

understood as a stepping stone, 13, 50, 91

understood as *praxis*, 91

Chadwick, O., 2, 13-16

Christophe, P., [3](#)

Chrysostom, John, [11](#), [13](#), [14](#), [16](#), [17](#)

Clark, E., [3](#), [55](#)

Coptic, [26-28](#), [31](#)

Courcelle, P., [7](#)

Crouzel, H., [115](#), [120](#) n. [68](#)

Ctesiphon, [54-57](#)

D

De laude eremi, [52](#)

Demotic, [26](#), [27](#)

Didymus the Blind, [38](#)

Diocletian, [26](#)

Diolcos, [92](#), [93](#), [98](#), [103](#) n. [8](#)

discernment, [75-79](#), [83](#), [93](#), [113](#)

Driscoll, J., [35-37](#)

E

Egypt:

language, [26-28](#)

native church, [27-28](#)

religion, pre-Christian, [26-28](#)

Roman administration, [25-28](#)

social divisions, [25-28](#)

see also Coptic; Demotic; monasticism, Egyptian

Eucherius of Lyons, [51](#), [52](#)

Eusebius of Caesarea, [48](#)

Eustochium, [50](#), [51](#), [53](#)

Evagrius of Antioch, [48](#)

Evagrius Ponticus:

biography, [35](#)

influence of Origen, [22](#), [35](#), [38](#), [56-58](#)

influence on Cassian, [3-4](#), [11](#), [15](#), [16](#), [83](#)

prayer, [36](#)

reading, [35-39](#)

Evans, R., [55](#)

F

Fish, S., [119](#) n. [49](#)

G

Gaul:

Cassian's readership, [5](#), [12](#)

hostility toward Origen, [5](#)

see also Cassian, John; Eucherius of

Lyons; Hilary of Arles; Jerome,

influence on West; Lazarus of Aix;

Martin of Tours; monasticism,

Gallic; Prosper of Aquitaine

Gennadius, [13](#), [15](#)

Germanus:

evolution of, [62](#), [68-71](#), [92](#), [93](#)

friendship with Cassian, [12](#), [15](#)

identity with reader, [66](#), [67](#), [69](#), [70](#)

Gould, G., 34

Griffe, È., 17-19

Guillaumont, A., 37

Guy, J.-C., 2, 6, 19 n. 8, 34, 35

H

Hadot, P., 32

Heliodorus, 49, 52

Heros, bishop of Arles, 18

Hilary, bishop of Arles, 52

Historia monachorum, 29, 38

humility, 75-77, 82, 96, 97, 103, 110, 114

I

Innocent, bishop of Rome, 14, 16-18

inpeccantia, 56-58

interiority:

relationship to reading, 6-8, 68-76, 79, 84-86, 112-118

relationship to spiritual exercises, 32

understood as *anachoresis*, [92-93](#), [101-103](#), [107-109](#)

Iser, W., [70](#), [112](#)

J

Jerome:

influence on West, [23](#), [51-53](#), [58](#)

on *apatheia*, [55-58](#)

on *inpeccantia*, [56-58](#)

on Origen, [5](#), [11](#), [15](#), [48](#), [54-58](#)

on Pelagianism, [54-58](#)

sojourn in Rome, [50](#), [51](#)

sojourn in Syria, [49](#), [50](#)

vision of monastic life, [22](#), [46-51](#), [98](#), [99](#)

John, *abba*, [99-102](#)

John, bishop of Jerusalem, [38](#), [54](#)

John Chrysostom, *see* Chrysostom, John

John of Lycopolis, [77](#), [78](#), [96](#)

John the Dwarf, [30](#)

Jovinian, [22](#), [23](#), [52](#), [57](#)

Judge, E., [28](#)

K

Kellia, [4](#), [13](#), [16](#), [17](#), [34](#), [35](#), [86](#), [117](#)

L

Lazarus of Aix, [17](#), [18](#)

Lea, [50-51](#)

Leo, bishop of Rome, [17](#)

Leroy, J., [92](#), [97](#), [102](#)

Letter to Marcellinus, [8](#), [85](#), [86](#), [114](#), [117](#)

Letters of Antony, [31-35](#), [46](#), [117](#)

Life of Antony, [23](#), [31](#), [33](#), [45-47](#), [51](#)

Life of Paul, [47](#), [50](#), [51](#)

logoi, [4-5](#), [35](#), [38](#), [69](#)

Logos, *see* Word

M

Machetes, *abba*, [77](#), [78](#)

MacLeod, C., [120](#) n. [81](#)

Markus, R., [3](#), [100](#)

Marrou, H.-L., [14](#)

Marseille, [11](#), [13](#), [17](#), [18](#), *see also* Proculus

Marsili, S., [2](#)

Martin, bishop of Tours, [18-19](#), [23](#), [51](#), [54](#)

Melania the Elder, [35](#), [38](#), [56](#)

monasticism, Egyptian:

common views of, [1](#), [13](#), [23](#), [50](#), [52](#), [53](#), [74](#), [93](#), [94](#)

economic activity, [29](#), [30](#)

method of instruction, [5](#), [34](#), [35](#), [38](#), [65](#), [74](#), [86](#)

oral nature of, [38](#)

origins, [28-29](#)

Pachomian communities, [21](#), [29](#)

supposed anti-hellenism, [24-28](#)

see also anachoresis-, anthropomor-

phite controversy; Antony;

Apophthegmata-, Athanasius;
Evagrius Ponticus; Kellia; Nitria;
Life of Antony; *Letters of Antony*;
Letter to Marcellinus; Origen;
Pachomius; Psalms, exegesis of;
Scetis
monasticism, Gallic:
growth of, [19](#), [23](#)
hostility toward Origen, [23](#), [56-58](#)
novitiate, [72-77](#)
view of Egypt, [22](#), [23](#)
inferiority, [99](#)
see also Gaul
Moses, *abba*, [67](#), [69](#)
Mount of Olives, [35](#), [38](#)
Munz, P., [3](#)
N

Nesteros, *abba*, [110](#)

Nitria, [4](#), [11](#), [13](#), [16](#), [17](#), [30](#), [34](#), [35](#), [38](#), [48](#), [53](#), [86](#), [117](#)

O

O’Laughlin, M., [37](#)

Olphe-Galliard, M., [2](#)

Origen:

Christology, [114-117](#)

influence on Cassian, [4](#), [6](#), [7](#), [11](#), [18](#), [117](#)

knowledge of God, [108](#)

reading, [114-117](#)

reception by Egyptian monks, [16](#), [22](#), [32](#), [33](#), [38](#), [84](#), [115-117](#)

reception by western monks, [5](#), [54](#), [56-58](#)

self-knowledge, [108](#)

P

Pachomius, [21](#), [29](#)

Palestine:

Cassian’s stay in, [12-16](#)

inferiority of monastic practices, [4](#), [12](#), [13](#)

Palladius, [13](#), [15](#), [17](#), [30](#), [35](#)

Pambo, *abba*, [70](#)

Paphnutius, *abba*, [91](#), [92](#)

Paula, [15](#)

Paul of Thebes, [47](#), [50](#), [51](#)

Pelagius, [11](#), [18](#), [54-58](#)

Pinufius, *abba*, [12](#), [13](#), [75-77](#), [84](#)

Poemen, *abba*, [30](#)

Poulet, G., [87](#) n. [9](#)

praxis:

nature of, [73-75](#), [94](#)

relationship to prayer, [93](#), [101](#), [102](#), [108](#), [109](#), [113](#)

relationship to reading, [70-86](#)

prayer:

highest form of, [80](#), [99](#), [102](#), [108](#), [112-117](#)

need for purity, [68](#), [97](#), [112-117](#)

relationship to *praxis*, [93](#), [101](#), [102](#), [108](#), [109](#), [113](#)

relationship to reading, [74](#), [81](#), [84](#), [111-117](#)

routine of, [72-77](#), [102](#), [109](#), [113](#)

see also theoria

Pristas, L., [4](#)

Proculus, bishop of Marseille, [1](#), [17](#), [18](#), [51](#)

Prosper of Aquitaine, [8](#) n. [6](#), [18](#)

prosopopoeia, [8](#)

Psalms, exegesis of:

according to Athanasius, [8](#), [84-86](#), [114](#), [115](#)

according to Cassian, [73](#), [74](#), [84-86](#), [114](#), [115](#)

according to Origen, [114](#), [115](#)

Ptolemies, [26](#), [28](#)

purity, [68](#), [78](#), [80](#), [92](#), [96](#), [101](#), [102](#), [109-117](#)

R

reading:

as a structured act, [6](#), [69](#), [70](#), [82](#), [92](#), [95](#), [110](#), [112](#), [113](#)

Cassian's use of autobiography, 6, 86

Cassian's use of dialogue, 65-67, 70, 77, 78

Cassian's use of *exempla*, 82-84

psalmody, 70, 73, 84-86, 114, 115

relationship to interiority, 6-8, 68-76, 79, 84-86, 112-118

relationship to *praxis*, 70-86, 109-118

relationship to stillness, 85, 108, 109

spiritual interpretation, 73, 80, 81, 111, 112, 115-117

transformation of the reader, 6-7, 68, 72, 73, 95, 110, 112

understood as *anachoresis*, 112-115

Remnuoth, 29, 99

Rondeau, M.-J., 120 n. 66

Rousseau, P., 3, 20 n. 37, 108

Rubenson, S., 31, 32

Rufinus of Aquileia:

conflict with Jerome, 15, 53-58

influence of Evagrius, 35, 38, 53-58

influence of Origen, [53-58](#)

monastic career, [22](#), [32](#), [48](#)

S

Sarabaites, [98](#), [99](#)

Sarapion, *abba*, [29](#)

Scetis, [4](#), [34](#)

Schwartz, E., [15](#)

self-knowledge:

according to Antony, [32-33](#)

according to Athanasius, [84-86](#)

according to Cassian, [33](#), [68-76](#), [79](#), [84-86](#), [112-117](#)

according to Origen, [84-86](#), [113-117](#)

psalmody a means to, [84-86](#)

reading a means to, [6-8](#), [68-76](#), [79](#), [84-86](#), [112-118](#)

see also interiority

Smith, A., [55](#)

Sozomen, [14](#)

spiritual exercises, 32-35

Stewart, C., 4, 9 n. 7, 20 n. 50

Stoicism, 31-35, 56

Sulpicius Severus, 51, 54

T

Theodore, *abba*, 78, 83, 110

Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, 11, 13, 16, 17, 35

theoria, 101, 110, 114

Torjeson, K., 120 n. 72

transfiguration, 69, 115-117

V

Vessey, M., 48

de Vogüé, A., 2, 8 n. 2,

W

Weber, H., 3, 9 n. 7

Word (*Logos*), 112, 114-116

Worthen, J., 90 n. 111, 112

Y

Youtie, H., [26](#)

Z

Zosimus, bishop of Rome, [18](#)